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56th year of publication

School shootings require intolerance of violence, experts say

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An ongoing string of school shootings has North American parents concerned about the safety of their children.

(Newsroom) — Deadly shootings in North American schools, like the tragedy in Santee, California, are likely to continue until society stops tolerating violence in any form and works to restore the moral values that once defined a more peaceful nation, some theologians and psychologists say.

"I think we are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that there is not a lot we can do to protect our children," said Marjorie Lindner Gunnoe, professor of psychology at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. "Maybe we're beginning to accept the fact that this is not an unusual, freak occurrence, and that it will continue to keep happening if we don't make clear stands individually and as a country about television, media violence, and gun control."

The recent shooting at Santana High School in the San Diego suburb was the worst at an American school since the massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. A 15-year-old boy, Andrew Williams, entered a boys' restroom and started shooting. When the firing stopped, two students lay dead or near death, and 13 other people were wounded.

As parents weep and worry about whose children might be next, some authorities wonder about the lessons learned in the two years since 14 students and a teacher died at Columbine.

How many kids will it take?

"People often ask how many kids is it going to take before parents say, 'I have to take responsibility'?" Gunnoe observed. "I'm distressed at how many educated people don't seem to be concerned that even their four-year-old is acting out the violent things they see on television, and they dress like Pokemon and the Ninja Turtles. They're not sending the message to their child that violence must be stopped at all costs.... Too many parents don't see desensitization as a problem....

"Maybe we're coming to the point where we say violence isn't funny," Gunnoe said. "I may have to take that extreme a position so my five-year-old recognizes it. We have to get to a point where it becomes such a taboo that people recognize it's not appropriate."

Jack Balswick, professor of sociology at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, said he thinks social scientists have learned more about what causes violence, but he believes that society can reduce violence only to a certain point. Beyond that point, he said, "there are always going to be troubled youth. It's not only a troubled youth but it's a youth that is troubled to the extent that (he has) some sort of psychological aberrations, and is going to be dangerous."

Insecure, ostracized boys

Balswick noted that most school shootings involve boys "who are feeling insecure, ostracized by other students, and that this is a way, if not getting back, getting notoriety or some underlying, inverse psychological need there being met by committing violent acts like this. And, it is significant where the violent acts are committed — it's in the context where they are being marginalized as students."

Americans are still trying to figure out what has gone wrong, observed Robert Royal, president of the conservative Faith & Reason Institute in Washington, D.C.

"There has been a widespread assumption in our society that we are all going to find ourselves fulfilled in the world and unopposed by others," Royal told Newsroom. "As much as that is desirable, much of what the earlier moral and religious tradition used to teach was how to deal with the world when that doesn't happen. And it doesn't happen in many ways for all of us."

In a *Crisis* magazine article in 1999, Royal said that regardless of what social problems Columbine High School was experiencing in 1999, the root of the problem was evil. "Evil exerts a strange fascination on the soul. Even those of us who have been taught to know better know how strong a grip it has on us. Healthy societies set up a whole system of coercive and non-coercive measures to deter and deflect evil. Our society, wonderful in so many ways, has also come to accept playing with dark forces as an alternative lifestyle.

See **LESSON** *page 2...*

Trigger happy: arms sales fall, but not in Third World

COURTESY CROSSROADS — LEE ABSALOM PHOTO

From 1991 to 1998 about three-quarters of all international arms deliveries, exceeding $250 billion, were exported to developing countries.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Zenit.org) — Arms exports have been declining since the end of the Cold War, but the Third World is buying a bigger share of the weapons. Worldwide, arms sales diminished in 1999 to $53.4 billion, down from $58 billion the previous year, according to an analysis of the latest report from the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Compared with the high point of the Cold War ($92.5 billion in 1987), sales have fallen notably. While international commerce in

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News

Lesson from Columbine: Get God back into schools

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Acknowledging evil as evil takes courage, the kind of discernment of spirits that we are called upon to practice even if we are not the final judge."

The lesson that society should have learned after Columbine "is that you've just got to get God back into the schools," said Pastor Tony Foglio, whose Sonrise Community Church in Santee hosted a community meeting. "Those foundations we had for over 200 years, we've got to put them back. I'm not talking about making every school a Christian school.... Talking about religion and Christianity should not be taboo. It's the foundation of our nation.... I think the Ten Commandments cross the lines of any religion."

Important to teach morals

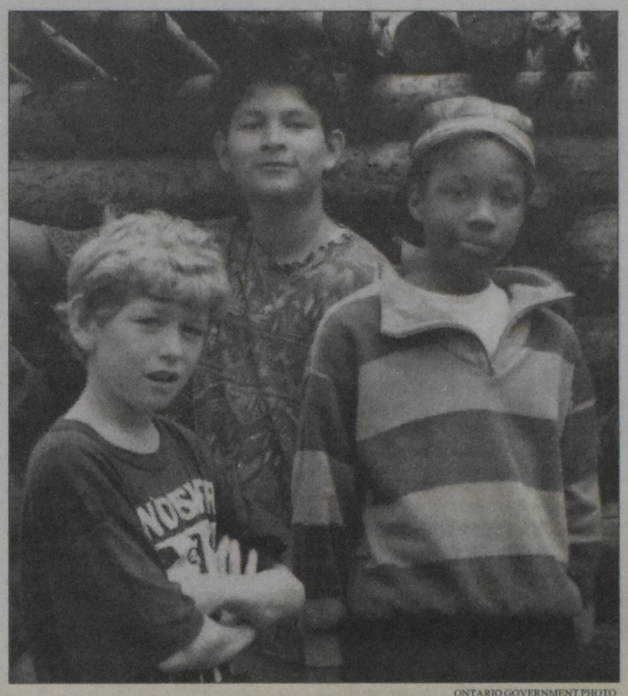
Royal and others said it is important to teach moral values, and to develop an understanding of the nature of human life individually and socially to enable teens to "talk back" to certain types of behavior. There is a mistaken notion, he said, "that American liberties give us the right to say anything. They don't. They don't give the government the right to restrain political speech, but the society as a whole certainly can deplore, boycott, object to, talk back to, reject all sorts of different things that a government should not be involved in censoring."

"It just seems to me that we can talk in moral language a lot more in public than we do," he asserted. Just as we now agree that racism and sexism are wrong, he ventured, maybe a majority can come to a consensus about many other things that are equally bad for persons and for society as a whole.

Gunnoe said people also need to acknowledge that even the most mature teenager is not skilled at thinking through how a situation could turn out, which is why so many students knew about the threatened violence at Santana High School, but told no one.

"We know adolescents often make bad judgment calls.... We also know that teenagers particularly like to engage in wishful thinking. They're not prepared to think through the many implications of what might happen," she explained.

She used the example of a teen who is being bullied and thinks



ONTARIO GOVERNMENT PHOTO

that waving a gun will make the bully back off. Teens don't consider the possibility that someone might push them and the gun would go off, or that the bully could become even more threatening, Gunnoe said.

Teens need to be taught protocols for responding to violent situations they might encounter, much like the Red Cross teaches CPR classes, she suggested. "They do role-playing. There is a protocol for what you are supposed to do." Similarly, she said, we may have to give "students practice, so this is not a question a 14-year-old has to think about what to do: 'I've seen a gun, here's what I'm supposed to do.'"

The law also should avoid what Royal calls a "type of schizophrenia" that discourages parental control in favor of a child's privacy. "It maybe a little bit too strong to say that there has been a legal attempt to get children from under the authority and cultural shaping powers of their parents, but I think effectively, whether anyone has intentionally set about to do that or not, that has happened in a lot of ways," he said.

The bottom line, Gunnoe said, is that Americans do not want to "give up the thrill of violence. It's entertaining. These things (school shootings) are going to continue to happen until we say it is not tolerable."

Report accuses Canadian government of 'gunboat diplomacy'

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — *Gunboat Diplomacy* is the title of a new report published by Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), which sharply criticizes the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) for its rough treatment of native lobster fishers in Burnt Church, New Brunswick last year.

The report, subtitled *Canada's Abuse of Human Rights at Esgenootpetitj (Burnt Church, N.B.)*, cites specific violations of human rights which CPT members witnessed last year, explores related legal and human rights principles, and makes recommendations for "a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict." CPT's report is clearly biased in favor of native fishers and against the DFO. It calls on the Canadian government to:

• Stop the violence;

• Negotiate in good faith with the Mi'kmaq people on a nation-to-nation basis. "The government musts honor the treaties, the various other international agreements to which it is a signatory, and its own laws," CPT asserts. "Instead of using intimidation and ultimatums, the government must refer unresolved disputes with aboriginal people to a mutually agreed independent adjudicator."

CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS

A Christian Peacemaker Team member accompanies aboriginal fishers in the Burnt Church, N.B., area.

• Stop wasting resources on a disproportionate and inappropriate response. "The DFO used a significant part of its budget in excessive enforcement measures against a small Mi'kmaq lobster fishery," CPT claims. "If this money were redirected to conflict transformation efforts and scientific research into lobster stocks, there would be significant progress toward a just and mutually satisfactory solution."

CPT also urges Canadians to:

• Learn about the historical and the present circumstances of this conflict;

• Call on our elected federal leaders to implement the above recommendations;

• Come together and pray for peace. "In response to Canada's ultimatums and violence, the Mi'kmaq people called repeatedly for patience and for prayer," states the agency. "CPT supports that call, believing that the prayers of the people are powerful and effective (James 5:16)."

CPT kept a four-to-six person team in the Burnt Church area last year during the spring (April 4-June 29) and the fall (Aug. 12-Oct. 30) lobster fishing seasons. Most of that time, CPT members kept watch on the shoreline, or rode as observers in native fishing boats and patrol boats whenever fishers felt there was a risk of violence.

Partnership, not domination

Examining legal aspects of last year's conflict between natives and government workers, CPT makes these points:

• Canada's law enforcement officials violated international laws and its own Criminal Code governing their use of force and the provision of immediate medical attention to persons in their custody. The DFO violated part of its own mandate 'to work toward safe waters.'

• The claim made by the Esgenootpetitj First Nation [EFN] for jurisdiction equal to and separate from that of Canada to manage its own fishery and other natural resources is rooted in EFN's own long history as a self-governing people. It is also supported by Canadian law and by international law.

• Canada claims a right to infringe on aboriginal rights in limited circumstances. This claim is disputed by aboriginal peoples. But even if such a right to infringe exists, the limitations on it were not respected by the DFO at Esgenootpetitj, CPT asserts. "The DFO has not presented nor proven the grounds for its infringement of EFN's treaty rights, nor has it compensated EFN for this infringement."

The agency concluded by recommending that "the Canadian government radically alter its dealings with the people of Esgenootpetitj by pursuing partnership with aboriginal people instead of domination. CPT calls on all Canadians to assist in the resolution of this conflict and the forging of fair and lasting terms for co-existence with aboriginal people and the sharing of the riches of God's good creation...."

CPT is a violence-reduction initiative of Christians from Canada and the U.S., with roots in the Mennonite, Brethren, Quaker and other denominations.

News

Developing countries buy arms, struggle to pay for health, education

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arms fell last year, however, overall military spending remains stable. The report said that $809 billion was dedicated to the military sector in 1999, almost the same quantity as the previous year. This is down from the Cold War peak of $1.36 trillion in 1987.

The report, "The Military Balance 2000-2001," points out procurement accounts for only about 20 to 30 per cent of military spending in countries with big arms budgets. The largest slice of the defense-budget pie in those countries is usually operations, maintenance and personnel.

Mideast countries continue to be the biggest buyers of arms, with Saudi Arabia spending $6.1 billion in 1999. In Asia, shipments to Taiwan totaled $2.6 billion.

In all, the G-7 countries accounted for 85 per cent of the exports. The United States raised its share of the world arms market to 49.1 per cent in 1999 from 47.6 per cent a year earlier, according to the report, while Britain was second with 18.7 per cent of the market. In third place came France with 12.4 per cent, after having doubled its previous market share of 6 per cent due to price cutting. Russia, the fourth-largest exporter, boosted its market share to 6.6 per cent from 4.6 per cent in 1998.

Among the Western countries, U.S. arms purchases have increased 6.5 per cent in real terms since 1995, even though defense procurement spending among European countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has dropped 2.2 per cent in real terms. Overall defense spending by European NATO countries also continued its declining trend, falling five per cent to $147 billion in constant 1999 dollars.

Russian sales increase

The BBC reported Feb. 7 that Russia's arms exports reached a 10-year high in 2000 with sales nearing $4 billion. Russian defense officials say their goal is to sell $6 billion of weapons per year — a fraction of the $20 billion exported by the Soviet Union in the 1980s. China and India were the leading customers throughout the 1990s, each purchasing more than $1 billion of Russian arms each year, but Russia views Iran as another promising market, despite U.S. disapproval.

Although sales of weapons by Western countries have diminished, ethical concerns remain. A worrying aspect is that almost 60 per cent of the 1999 sales were destined to Third World countries, which in many cases are struggling to pay for education and health programs. While both rich and poor countries spend on average approximately the same share of gross national product, 2.6 per cent, military spending as a proportion of government revenues in the Third World reaches 13 per cent, compared with 9 per cent in the developed nations.

At the same time the Third World has increased its share of world military spending, from 7 per cent in 1961 to almost 25 per cent in 1995. From 1991 to 1998 about three-quarters of all international arms deliveries, exceeding $250 billion, were exported to developing countries.

Apart from economic questions, another source of unease is that many weapons are destined to countries that do not observe basic human rights. For example, 40 per cent of the arms that Spain sells go to nations that violate human rights or that are involved in internal conflicts, according to a report in the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo*. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, the Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Indonesia and Turkey are among Spain's customers. Other buyers, such as Bulgaria and Burkina Faso, are suspected of reselling arms to guerrilla movements or to countries placed under international arms embargoes.

In England, too, protests have been made about the lack of controls on arms sales. *The Telegraph* reported that the Labor government's pre-election pledge to legislate to control arms exports emains "a promise unfulfilled," according to Kim Howells, junior trade and industry minister. An article in *The World Today*, published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, accused Britain of having sold arms that "have seen more service in coercion, repression and aggression than in self-defense." In fact the article noted that in 1982 Argentina deployed British weapons in the Falklands War and that in 1991 the supply of machine tools from English companies helped to produce munitions in Iraq. The publication also accused the British government of muting its criticism of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor due to its desire to continue selling arms.

Ethical principles

A paper "The International Arms Trade: An Ethical Reflection" published by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in 1994 notes that the right to legitimate defense by armed means should be coupled with the duty to reduce to a minimum the causes of violence.

Each state may possess only those means necessary to ensure its legitimate defense, says the paper. But the excessive accumulation of weapons, or their indiscriminate transfer, is not justifiable.

The pontifical paper points out that arms can never be treated like other commercial goods because of the close relationship between weapons and violence. Therefore the law of profit cannot be supreme and sales should be subject to strict controls.

Episcopal group calls for focus on AIDS crisis

(Religion Today) — The executive council of the Episcopal Church has asked the global Anglican Communion to make the AIDS crisis in the developing world a higher priority. During a recent meeting in New Jersey, the 39-member council passed a resolution expressing "deep anguish and compassion" for the 34 million people around the world so affected.

The Episcopal Church is the U.S. branch of the 70 million-member Anglican Communion, which is seeing its fastest growth in Africa and other parts of the Third World. According to the church 70 per cent of the world's AIDS patients live in Africa.

The council directed its staff to find ways for the U.S. church to help stem the crisis abroad, as well as to increase U. S. education and prevention efforts.

Turned off by beef? Eat horse!

CC Staff

Fear of mad cow disease and now of hoof and mouth disease has been turning Europeans away from beef and looking for alternatives. One of those alternatives is horse meat, and one good source of horse meat is Canada.

Prices have jumped from 40 to 75 cents a pound in recent weeks and the numbers of horses being slaughtered have increased but not dramatically.

Horse meat has long been part of the diet in many European countries, but not in Canada and the U.S., especially not in the West. Claude Bouvry of Bouvry Exports in Calgary, which owns slaughtering houses in Alberta and Quebec, admitted to the *Ottawa Citizen* that he doesn't really like to talk about it because publicity inevitably arouses protests.

Butcher gets slow horses

Despite the growth in demand and the increase in price, Canadian packers are not able to increase exports very much because horses are not raised for meat. Those that are slaughtered were once riding horses or race horses that didn't run fast enough. The butcher gets the laggards. The largest number, however, are foals born to mares whose urine is collected for the manufacture of Premarin, an estrogen replacement therapy.

Because horses are not fed animal byproducts or growth hormones, Europeans tend to think the meat is safer. Not so, says Lisa Prinn of HelpHorses Canada, an Ontario-based horse protection society; she warns that horses are treated with all sorts of veterinary drugs that are not safe for humans. Of course, she has an axe to grind – or perhaps to dull. Her organization wants to ban the slaughter of horses, as the state of California has done. She contends that having to travel so far in trucks just to be turned into smoked meat is not humane.

Of course, Canadians travel thousands of miles themselves every March break just to turn themselves into smoked meat.

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Editorial

Our passion and Christ's

Harry der Nederlanden

The cross has often been described as the way that love follows in this violent world. Those who actually live out of love, it is said, will inevitably call down suffering upon themselves. In fact, in this context love gets depicted as passive, as willingness to suffer. This has a long and noble lineage. The word "passive" has the same root as "passion" as in Christ's passion, and we often refer to intense love as a "passion".

Love and death have always been closely linked, especially by poets and novelists, and not just in the Christian tradition.

Of course, one might object, love and life have always been closely linked, too, and much more naturally. We're more likely to associate death with justice than with love; it is the state that exercises the power of the sword.

But, then, it does so not merely for justice, but also for the love and care of its citizens, or perhaps in a democracy we should say that citizens hold the power of life and death out of love for themselves.

No longer matters of life and death

Israel had the death penalty for many offenses in Jesus' day – for everything from adultery to blasphemy. We no longer even consider these to be crimes, but in Israel they were ranked alongside murder and treason. Today adultery is a private and blasphemy a religious matter. They are no longer seen as matters of life and death.

Rome, the centre of the Roman Empire, also made liberal use of the power of the sword. That was how it extended its sphere of influence, its power to impose its legal and economic order over a huge variety of nations, including Israel. Rome built an extensive system of roads, primarily to enable the swift movement of its well-equipped legions. The *pax romana* (Roman peace) that brought unprecedented prosperity to the Mediterranean world was founded on the sword, that is, on the ability to hack apart men in great numbers should they resist the benefits of Roman order.

Along with Roman order came Greek culture – Hellenism. Until well into the 20th century most of the works read by children in the Western world as part of their liberal arts education were products of Hellenic culture: the poetry, the drama, the philosophy, the history – all came from Greece and Rome. To be civilized was to be steeped in the classics.

Those without exposure to the classics and its humanizing values were said to be barbarians, peasants, rubes, blithering fools. Educators like to speak of culture as that which refines, uplifts enlightens and liberates us all to participate in a common humanity. A very credible case, however, can be made for culture as that which enables a privileged few to lord it over the rest.

Christian culture: a new order

Yet, out of love for our children and a passionate conviction that certain values, certain institutions, a certain way of life will provide happiness, security, freedom, peace – all the things that make life good – we labor mightily and long for a host of "abstract" things beyond the mighty dollar. The totality of these things we used to call civilization, Christian civilization. Now we more often speak of Christian culture, a way of life embodied not just in worship and personal morality but in a new order that encompasses everything we do.

People have always had such visions and pursued them with passion. Love or passion is more, much more, than a kiss, a cuddle and a bicycle made for two. Lovers give rise to families, schools, churches; they build homes, roads, grow potatoes and flowers, write poems; they uphold codes of ethics, write laws because they want peace and justice for those whom they love. Love dreams of the Kingdom of Heaven, when love and faithfulness embrace, righteousness and peace kiss each other because the salvation of the Lord is among us.

Not just Israel, but also the Greeks and Romans pursued high ideals with a passion, a passion to seize hold of truth and make it real.

Sometimes we talk about Jesus as if he had nothing to do with this passionate, bloody stuff of human history and society, as if he was just about personal relationships and inwardness and let the rest pass by. True, he never tried to displace Caiaphas. He never organized Israel's zealots to liberate Palestine, and never set his sights on Caesar's throne. He never went about seeking out the brightest and the best to found an academy to rival those of Greece and Egypt; indeed, he never even wrote a book.

He spent his rather brief life wandering about from insignificant town to insignificant town in a rather insignificant country with a few unremarkable men. He made some important people mad and brought judgment down upon himself. He died as a criminal, but not as a fierce, heroic criminal like Barabbas, someone you might even be inclined to admire for the strength of his commitment to a cause. Jesus' trial and execution were something of a farce, an embarrassment to all involved.

Even to his disciples.

The foundations of our civilized life

They were with him night and day for years, watching, listening, walking in his footsteps, footsteps that led straight to the cross. They walked along beside him, but they thought they were headed toward the realization of all those ideals and visions of the future summed up in the names Israel, Greece, Rome. They are ideals still celebrated by good conservatives, humanist and Christian alike. Israel's high ethic, Greece's culture and philosophy, Rome's law and order — these are the foundations of our civilized life together. We – and people all over the world – still hunger and thirst for the benefits of this culture. Calvinists and Kuyperians and worldview evangelicals too.

When the disciples saw Jesus their Lord crucified as a criminal, they didn't just lose a close friend, the leader of their little clan, they lost a world that was taking shape on the horizon. They were walking with him toward a heavenly city, and suddenly they looked around and they were standing on the hill of skulls, the place of outcasts, of human offal.

He's a fool, a clown, a fanatic, said the wise men of Greece. He's a no-account, a bum, a rabble-rouser, less than worthless as a citizen, said the Roman authorities, we wash our hands of him. He's a blasphemer, a maverick, a demagogue who foments confusion among the people, said the learned men of Israel, he's subverting the torah and our Jewish identity.

In the light of the accumulated ideals of humanity he was found wanting. They sought to expunge him from the face of the earth.

And God orchestrated it that way. All those high, humane ideals showed their collective teeth when God sent his Son to walk among us and beside us. We, too, as we follow Christ in this world, press upon him a complex assemblage of roles and expectations, entire theologies, weighty traditions, rigorous moralities, dynamic worldviews and cosmoscapes, visions of renewal and liberation.

Then we come to the cross. And God, our Father and Provider who blessed us with all these good gifts that make us human, he turns them on us. We stand condemned, not just by God, but by our own highest, noblest standards.

At the core and pinnacle of our highest expression of love by which we would embrace and uplift all humanity, we encounter the cross. Judgment. Death. Here, at the centre of time and history where three civilizations converge, darkness falls. The earth shudders in agony. The entire edifice of civilization, towering higher than Babel, tumbles into ruin, burying us all.

Anxious to affirm creation structures and the Old Testament, we Reformed folk tend to downplay the radical judgment that happens here. That's not really necessary.

Not if, with the two disciples who walked the long road to Emmaus, our eyes are opened to all that rises in his resurrection, from the beginning of time to now, from the garden to the heavenly city.

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Dutch cardinal says church is being sidelined by government

AMSTERDAM (ENI) — The head of the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands, Cardinal Adrian Simonis, of Utrecht, accuses the Dutch government of regarding the church as a "non-entity". The Catholic Church is the biggest church in The Netherlands. Cardinal Simonis made his remarks in an interview in the *Volkskrant*.

State taking over church's tasks

"Originally the separation of church and state meant that the state should not concern itself with church matters," said Cardinal Simonis. "But now it has gone so far that [Christian] belief and the church no longer have any public meaning for the government. The government merely sees citizens as individuals, no matter whether they believe or not."

One consequence, the cardinal complained, was that the state was taking over the church's tasks. As a result, the political establishment, rather than society at large, is now defining social values and norms. The cardinal referred specifically to marriage, a hot issue here because the Netherlands is soon to become one of the first countries in the world to allow civil marriage between people of the same sex. On April 1, the mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen, will officiate at the civil marriages of four same-sex couples in the town hall.

Cardinal, not cannibal

Cardinal Simonis also said that the secularization of Dutch society has led to widespread ignorance about the church. "I'm just happy when people don't call me cannibal [instead of 'cardinal']. That's happened before."

Cardinal Simonis complained that for the past three years Prime Minister Kok has refused to meet with him. The cardinal contrasted the Dutch premier's apparent lack of interest with that of the US president, George W. Bush, who has called on Jews, Muslims and Christians to re-establish values and norms. "That's a note you no longer hear in the Netherlands," the cardinal said.

Asked about the practice of some Catholic priests who are blessing same-sex marriages, Simonis said, "I can imagine that there are priests who feel they have no choice when asked to bless such a marriage. In their heart they do not want to, but otherwise they will lose the believers. I know of one such priest, whom I have called to account." (About 80 per cent of Catholic priests in the Netherlands are not respecting their church's ban on the blessing of same-sex marriages outside church walls, according to a survey by the University of Utrecht in co-operation with a gay newspaper. About half the priests surveyed have no problem with same-sex marriage ceremonies inside church buildings.)

The cardinal also rejected suggestions, often stated in the Netherlands, that Roman Catholic teaching was rigid. "The [Roman Catholic] Church world-wide has its moral basis in Scripture and tradition," he said. "We sin, because humans are sinful, but the rules must remain."

Church cannot be democratic

The church cannot be democratic, he added. "We [Roman Catholics] are called to be orthodox believers. There is no other choice. Orthodoxy belongs to the essence of [Christian] belief."

Responding to the church leader's criticisms, Prime Minister Kok said that the cabinet listened to all sections of society, but ultimately takes responsibility for drawing up the nation's laws. Kok stressed that there would continue to be major differences of opinion between the cardinal and members of the cabinet, including himself, on such issues as euthanasia, abortion and gay marriage.

The premier added that members of the cabinet were willing to hold discussions with the Catholic bishops' conference. "I will shortly phone the cardinal myself to invite him for a cup of coffee."

About 34 per cent of the Netherlands' 15 million citizens are Roman Catholic. About 27 per cent are Protestant and three per cent Muslim, with two per cent belonging to other faiths. About 36 per cent have no religious affiliation.

Sri Lanka's president orders inquiry into attack on Evangelical church

NEW DELHI, India (ENI) — Sri Lanka's president, Chandrika Kumaratunga, has ordered an investigation into a mob attack on Sunday, February 18, 2001 at an Evangelical church in the centre of the country. Twenty-five people were injured, three of them seriously, during the attack on the Sanasum Sevana (New Life) church in Nuwarawatte near Hingurankoda, 220 kilometres north-east of Colombo.

"The mob that attacked the church was armed with swords and iron rods," said M. A. Sumandiran, a spokesman for the Evangelical church. The church itself was severely damaged in the attack and "only the walls and roof remained," he told reporters.

In Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital, the Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka (EASL) issued a statement saying that "masked men stormed the church just after midnight on Saturday, and smashed up the church building and property. As the believers and pastor came together on Sunday morning to assess the damage and have a prayer meeting, a mob of 100 stormed the place and assaulted the pastor and believers mercilessly."

The attack has angered many Christians, but the nation's main ecumenical body has urged people not to "over-react."

Are we lowering the bar?

After reading the article "Grade inflation redefines academic success, scholar says" and your editorial, "Testing the lines we draw in the sand" (Mar 5/01), I couldn't help but ask the question, "Are some churches, like some schools, guilty of lowering the bar so that people feel good about themselves and continue filling the pews and collection plates?"

Jesus' instruction to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow him is not for those who want a cushiony self-gratifying existence. It's hard work, yet so rewarding.

Life with Christ is active and progressive, requiring communication, perseverance, commitment and *diligence*.

When theological discussion and expression of opinion is discouraged out of fear we may have to reassess and change in some way — either our attitudes, behaviors, perceptions or beliefs — we stagnate, become repugnant and miss out on the beauty that comes through growth and maturity in Christ Jesus.

I look forward to reading the essays you have planned on Reformed tradition. May they reveal it to be (as you describe, Harry) a 'genuine mark of faith' rather than the 'gang colors, or team jackets that give us a sense of belonging'. If the latter is true may we have the piety and grace to exchange those superficial, albeit seemingly comfortable jackets, for the seamless, more comfortable robe worn by our Lord and Savior.

Irene VanderSpruit
Stirling, Ont.

Quebec Christian school has uniforms, too

We received the March 5 issue of CC today. In it we read about the new Christian high school to be opened this fall in Oakville. Congratulations. We wish you God's blessing.

However Mr. Vanderkooy's claim that the new school is the first OACS school with uniforms is incorrect. The Ecole Cretien Emmanuel Christian school in Dollard des Ormeaux , Quebec, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in the year 2000 was the first. It has always has been an interdenominational Christian School. It started out as a Christian high school in 1975 and the elementary school was added a few years later. As far as uniforms are concerned, especially the CRC mothers had to get used to the idea, but it did not take them long to appreciate the fact that there never was an argument what the kids were going to wear and, secondly, whenever there was a choir or other presentation all one saw was a group of students in uniform and no fashion show.

O. Bouma
Oshawa, Ont.

For a quick Letter to the Editor, send e-mail to: cceditor@aol.com or a fax to: 905-682-8313.

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Science

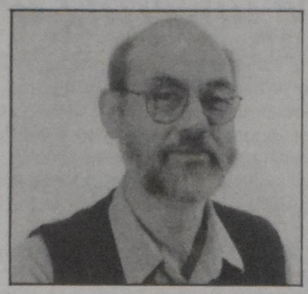
Creationist professor critical of some creationists

Alan Doerksen

ANCASTER, Ont. — Christian biologist Dr. Jitse van der Meer, Professor of Biology and Philosophy at Redeemer University College, is a creationist, but disagrees with the approaches taken by some creationist agencies, and thinks they should take science more seriously.

Recently, CC reported that George Pearce, director of the Creation Science Association of B.C., contends that a Christian who believes in evolution is "an oxymoron"(see March 5 CC, page 6). But Van der Meer asserts, "I have lots of friends who believe in evolution who are also committed Christians." He adds, "I do not adhere to the theory of evolution." There may be questions raised by both theories, but Van der Meer comments, "In everyday life, you live with lots of unsolved problems."

Van der Meer criticizes some creationist agencies for not being "very active at an academic level," and not being interested in creating "a credible alternative" to evolution. Many creationists are "six-day young-earth creationists" who focus on the idea of a global flood, he states. They also stress



COURTESY DR. JITSE VAN DER MEER

Dr. Jitse van der Meer

"the point you cannot understand living things because they are so complex." Van der Meer feels creationists should focus more on other issues, such as the fossil record.

Questioning evolution

In a paper Van der Meer published in 1989, *Towards a Framework for the Coherence of Faith and Science*, he examines the evolutionist interpretation of the fossil record: "Firstly, the known fossils form a very incomplete representation of the diversity of organisms once alive, because fossilization is a rare event, and selects only those organisms that are suitable for fossilization. Secondly, historical facts are used selectively in the reconstruction of history. And the selection is influenced considerably by the investigator's presuppositions about the history of the cosmos, which are usually evolutionary."

Van der Meer also questions the way evolutionists compare humans with primates such as chimpanzees. "Within a biblical worldview, humans are not merely animals. Therefore, a comparison of just the biological aspects of chimpanzees and humans necessarily leads to great similarities by excluding uniquely human characteristics such as self-consciousness, morality, martyrdom, religion, etc. In other words, the conclusion is contained in the assumption."

Conservative and liberal Christians tend to differ on the issue of creation, says Van der Meer. "Where the rubber meets the road is where this fits in [with] the Bible," he says. "There, you will find the ways part between Christians who are theologically liberal versus those who are conservative." For instance, liberal Christians may agree that humanity has fallen, but may not accept the Genesis interpretation of creation.

Evidence handled badly

Van der Meer cites two examples of how creationists have dealt badly with what they considered to be evidence for creation. Many years ago, he says, some people claimed to have found footprints of humans and dinosaurs in the same rock. "If that were a verifiable fact, that would have been quite surprising," says van der Meer, because it would prove that humans and dinosaurs existed at the same time. But decades later, tests were done which showed that the human footprints had been carved into the rock. Creationist agencies didn't do enough to check the credibility of this evidence, he contends. "A very significant fact was handled badly."

Another example, he cites is how some creationists have misinterpreted studies of the earth's magnetic field. One creationist group concluded from changes that have occurred in the earth's magnetic field over the past 100 years that the earth must have been created 10,000 years ago. But they didn't take into account the widely-held scientific theory that the earth's magnetic field — and its north and south magnetic poles — have reversed a number of times, something which is found in the polarity of rocks of various ages. Van der Meer sees the creationist interpretation, in this case, as being "a very deplorable kind of bad science.... They ought to be careful with their reputation."

His own views

Explaining his own views on creation, Van der Meer says, "I believe that God created major groups of plants and animals." These have boundaries between them, but he admits, "ultimately, it's not really possible to pin down where those boundaries are." Scientific investigation can help find out where boundaries are between species by trying to cross different types of animals, for instance, to see if they produce offspring.

"I believe Adam and Eve were created by God as individuals," says Van der Meer. But we may have to live with some open questions about the creation, he suggests.

"My questions on faith and science began in high school," he recalls. "I found those questions could not only be answered by science."

At Redeemer, he teaches both creation and evolution. "I give one or two lectures about the most important worldviews that have shaped biology," he explains. "I show that the theory of evolution fits into one of those worldviews, which is materialism.... I also introduce the idea of scientific creationism." Van der Meer says he is "critical in a sympathetic way" of scientific creationism. "I give the students that information so they can make up their own minds.... I also try to give them a hand in criticizing evolution."

But Van der Meer is critical of debates between creationists and evolutionists. "These debates produce more heat than light," he observes. People involved are often concerned about winning and not losing face rather than getting the facts straight.

At Redeemer, Van der Meer was director of the Pascal Centre for Advanced Studies in Faith and Science for 11 years, and helped to organize major conferences related to faith and science.

I'm looking forward to meeting my *neighbours.*

For me it's similar to moving into a new neighbourhood. I'm excited about making friends who have the same interests. It's sure to happen in a community of like-minded people with shared experiences and an active outlook on things.

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Templeton prize goes to a scientist for third year

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — This year's Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion goes to the Rev. Arthur Peacocke, a physical biochemist who is also an ordained Anglican priest. Peacocke is the third scientist in as many years to win the honor.

Peacocke was honored for what was described as his pioneering exploration of the "creative interaction of science and theology."

In a statement at the press conference to announce his selection, Peacocke said he often answers questions about how he, as a research scientist, could become so interested in religion. "My response is that the search for intelligibility that characterizes science and the search for meaning that characterizes religion are two necessary, intertwined strands of the human enterprise and are not opposed," he said.

The Templeton Prize was created in 1973 by financier and philanthropist John Templeton as a companion to the Nobel Prizes, and includes a stipend of about $1 million. Past winners have included Mother Theresa and the Rev. Billy Graham as well as physicists Freeman Dyson (1999) and Ian Barbour (2000).

"It does make me feel good about what I've spent half of my life doing," Peacocke said of the prize. Peacocke, the only Oxford University faculty member who has doctorates in both science and divinity, notes that while religion versus science may make interesting headlines, co-operation between religion and science is perhaps more important. Particularly as scientists continue to explore new frontiers in genetics, a religious perspective is needed to address questions that are being raised about ethics and the nature of man, he said.

Peacocke believes that evolution and theism needn't be enemies, and that God's hand can be seen throughout the process of evolution. "It isn't as though God is outside, coming in every now and again to kick things and tweak things, pushing them in the right direction," he explained. "God makes things to make themselves."

Peacocke is the founder of the Society of Ordained Scientists, an understandably exclusive club which now has 79 members. The group's purpose is to encourage spirituality among scientists, and to act as a liaison between the scientific community and the Anglican church.

Environment

But ask the animals, and they will teach you (Job 12:7)

Frank DeVries

As a kid back in Holland I well remember experiencing ferocious thunderstorms. Our Dad would shoo the entire family into the hall and forever remind us that in the thunder God was speaking. More often than not a series of relentless thunderclaps and lightning streaks would lend weight to his words, making us think that an angrily bellowing God would end it all right then and there. At those times, too, I often made the decision not to sin again. Ever.

EDWARD S. ROSS

Ant 'dairy farmers' tend a 'herd' of aphids.

Alas, after the storm the skies would clear, and the deeply inhaled smoke of a stolen package of "Blazertjes" (the black-paper-wrapped wartime cigarettes) out of our tobacco store would soon soothe my frayed nerves.

God speaks through gentle things

Now it is probably true that God speaks to us in thunderstorms (Psalm 29), but it was never pointed out to me that God also might speak to us in gentle, little things like dew-laden spiderwebs, or the wings of a butterfly. It isn't that I wish to cast any retroactive aspersions on anyone. Those were different times, a different culture. One only needs to read current papers and magazines or listen to the news to realize that even today it is mostly things that are great and loud and strong and mega that draw most attention.

Interestingly this even holds true among environmentalists, for much attention is given to saving the elephant, the rhino, the whale and the grizzly to name a few, but we don't hear an awful lot about saving the spider. Or the ant. Or the fruitfly. This is why I want to talk about "bugs." For every day zillions of these tiny animals (yes, bugs ***are*** animals) are gratuitously and unnecessarily killed. "Ah," you say, "Who cares? There are so many of them." Their large numbers seem to make it all right to mark them for a casual yet determined effort to exterminate them on sight.

The very smallness of bugs appears to provoke the killing instinct, not only in children (especially little boys), but also in adults. As soon as a bug comes in sight, many of us go out of our way to step on it. It's even more dangerous for them inside people's homes, for it is here that moms swat them or squash them with dustcloths. A fruitfly hardly leaves a smear on a window pane. For some bugs an even worse fate awaits: they get disposed of in the housekeeper's most effective weapon — the vacuum cleaner, where they die a slow, lingering death in a dustbag.

"Bugs," it is held, "Don't belong in people's homes."

Of course this may well be true, but then on Sunday in church we sing,

All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great ***and*** *small*
All things wise and wonderful
The Lord God made them all.

We close our eyes and sing in religious fervor at the top of our lungs, neck muscles straining with enthusiasm, veins a-popping and tonsils flapping happily in the breeze. And then we go home and purposely step on an ant.

We cannot imagine putting on a pair of hob-nailed boots to jump up and down on a puppy, or to stomp on a newborn kitten. You and I have a good idea what that would look like. Yet, if you observed a squashed ant under a microscope, it wouldn't look a whole lot different from a squashed puppy or kitten. The only difference is that with the naked eye you can't see the mess you made of what moments earlier was still a wonderfully alive little creature.

Killing with no reason

It's not that I am fanatic about this, for I, too, have killed red ants or wasps or mosquitoes when they began to feed on me or hurt me. What I do think is wrong is the capricious, wanton, pointless killing of them — killing something without a reason.

The old saying *Natura in minimus maxima* (nature is greatest in the smallest things) clearly confirms the importance of "bugs."

But what to do then when you find one of these little crawlies in your home and you don't want it there, and you for sure don't want to touch it because even just looking at it gives you the heebeejeebees?

Catch and release

There is a simple solution. All you need to do is what I have been doing for many years: keep a small medicine bottle or glass handy on a window sill together with about half of an old postcard. Whenever you notice a tiny something that moves around in your house and you don't want to make it a housepet, place the jar over top of it, slide the postcard underneath, and release the bug outside.

In so doing, you accomplish two important things: 1) you save the life of a bug that now can go play outside again with his little friends, and 2) in a small yet very important way you once more have joyfully responded to what a long time ago we were ordained to do:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (Gen. 2:15)

And so as a faithful steward in the Lord's vineyard and co-worker with him, you have done the right thing, and that will make you feel good. As well as the bug. And the Lord too.

In this world where every day we are being desensitized, especially our children, I believe it is urgent that all Christian parents and teachers by word and example teach children about the sanctity of life — and that this sanctity also extends, perhaps even especially, to bugs.

In case you have any doubts about this, just ask the animals. They will teach you.

Frank DeVries lives in Nanaimo, B.C.

Not so fast on those extinction rates

Creation waits...
John Wood

Far Side cartoonist Gary Larson likes the extinction debate. In the early '80s when a killer asteroid was said to end the reign of dinosaurs he drew a trio of dinosaurs sneaking a smoke behind a rock. The caption reads, "The real reason the dinosaurs became extinct." Then last year he pictured a self-satisfied fossil skeleton in sunglasses, relaxing on a beach blanket, with a tall drink at hand. A one-line caption reads, "Extinct and loving it."

All this good fun highlights a much more difficult matter. Scientists know that species are going extinct more quickly than in the past. But it is difficult to say precisely how fast it is occurring. This week in a lead- in to an editorial on the Canadian endangered species act the announcer said, "Scientists today tell us that two or three species go extinct every hour." This is a startling number. But does it give a true picture of what is actually happening?

Will the real extinction rate please stand up

It doesn't take much to get the public exercised about the loss of species on the planet. But these incredibly high estimates can be misleading. In his 1979 book, *The Sinking Ark*, Norman Myers postulated a global extinction rate of one species per day. He got this number by extrapolating from a single forest zone in the tropics. Harvard zoologist E.O. Wilson applied his species-area theory for islands to the problem. He estimates that each day anywhere from 48 to 72 species a day go extinct. That is from two to three species per hour. But by 1999 he had revised that number downward to 27 per day or just over one species per hour. Now in a talk to High School students recently one expert claimed that "100 different species of life become extinct every 24 hours" (reported by both Jen Weening and Laura Smit, CC February 19, 2001). Older observers who can remember these various estimates might ask, "What is going on here?"

What do we really know?

Scientists investigating this question caution that there is still much we do not know, and perhaps cannot know about species extinction. The best estimates that we can make are built upon a combination of evidence from many sources. They begin with past extinction rates, inferred from the fossil record at about one species per year. Extinction is also correlated with human activities over the past 30,000 to 50,000 years, including the loss of 80 per cent of North America's megafauna (like the Wooly Mammoth). We also have direct counts of extinct species from 1600 to today (a total of 1090 species). Mathematical models, like Wilson's show species decline when habitat is destroyed (removing 90 per cent of habitat results in a 50 per cent species loss). And most recently the new relaxation models have prompted cartoon puns like Larson's.

From observations of temperate forests that were cleared a century ago we see sharp increases in species extinction. But in the newly cleared tropical forests there is little confirmed extinction. Yet the many threatened species in fragmented forests are expected to decline, or relax in technical jargon, to a lower level. The new models showing this lag are currently being debated among ecologists. There remains a great deal of uncertainty about what some call our extinction debt. But despite this uncertainty conservation biologists agree that we are in for substantial losses. As much as 20 per cent or more of all species, if we do not take action.

The upshot

It is not surprising that the general public is both confused and greatly concerned about species extinction. We must use caution, but prudence is not an excuse for inaction. As Laura Smit wisely concludes, "God doesn't want inaction" (CC, February 19, 2001). We could go a long way to solving the extinction crisis if we learned the lesson of tithing the land in our generation. If we had the courage and the hope needed to make room for other creatures in the midst of our business. This is a pressing need, but exaggerating the problem will do little to help.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.

Church

Armenian church faces post-communist challenges

Stephen Brown

GENEVA (ENI) — As Armenia celebrates the 1700th anniversary of Christianity as a national religion, the country's spiritual leader says that his church faces major challenges as it seeks to rebuild its life in a newly independent state. This year marks a major celebration for the Armenian Apostolic Church, one of the world's oldest Christian communities; in AD 301, Armenia became the first nation to adopt Christianity as a state religion.

Catholicos Karekin II of the Armenian Apostolic Church told the World Council of Churches that the traditional bond between the Armenian people and his church had helped to preserve Christianity during 70 years of Soviet Communism.

RONALD SHERIDAN'S PHOTO LIBRARY

An Armenian Cathedral in Jerusalem. The ostrich eggs suspended from the roof serve as symbols of hope and resurrection.

Harsh words for 'new missionaries'

But he had harsh words for "new missionaries" who had arrived in Armenia since the collapse of Communism, saying that they had come to his country to divide his church, undermine traditional faith and "confuse the people," more than 90 per cent of whom, the Catholicos said, are members of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Catholicos Karekin's remarks reflect widespread concern among Orthodox church leaders in the former Soviet Union about the activities of evangelical groups, and in some cases the Catholic Church, in the region. The Orthodox consider the presence of foreign churches as "proselytism" — the seeking of converts from within established church communities.

He rejected suggestions that his church's criticism of what he described as "sects" infringes human rights and religious liberty. He condemned those "who come and criticise us on the basis of their own understanding of religious liberty".

Law curbs spread of non-traditional faiths

Armenia's law on religion was amended in 1997 to curb the spread of non-traditional faiths and movements — including some Evangelical groups, Jehovah's Witnesses and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints — prompting criticism by some minority churches and human rights advocates.

"Sometimes freedom of conscience is confused with anarchy," Catholicos Karekin said.

"We are not against evangelization," he added. "We are against those who are dividing families, especially parents from children, by promising a good life to the child."

Recovering from Soviet communism

Following its independence from the Soviet Union, Armenia faces major challenges, Catholicos Karekin said. "Armenia is now an independent state. The people and church have finally got rid of the burden of atheism. During the 70 years of the Soviet regime, the Armenian church and all other churches under that regime suffered great difficulties. During this period, churches were destroyed and clergy were exiled. Monasteries and churches were transformed for other uses."

However, Christianity has been preserved, he said, because of the close link between the Armenian people and the Armenian Apostolic Church. Since its establishment, the church had played a significant role in the identity of the Armenian people, both for those in Armenia and for the extensive Armenian diaspora around the world.

Church, people one entity

"Church and people became one single entity, one single reality," Catholicos Karekin said. "People began to see the church as the guardian of Armenian identity. Especially in the diaspora, people have begun to see the church as a defence of their identity."

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the church has reopened church buildings that had not been used under Communism, built new ones, and trained a "new generation of clergy", as well as educating catechists, and encouraging new publications.

"The church did the impossible. In a very brief period we trained hundreds of teachers, established new educational and theological institutions, and sponsored youth work by transforming places for young pioneers [the Communist youth movement] into youth centres," Catholicos Karekin said.

But, he added: "All that we did is really nothing in view of the huge needs that still exist in the country."

Lay leadership necessary to goals of churches

(Religion Today) — "Lay leaders are not being purposely put into church leadership roles," states George Barna, a California-based author and researcher. "Moses had his team of leaders, as did Joshua and, of course, the apostle Paul always traveled with a team of leaders. Why is it, then, that Christian churches in America have majored in solo-based rather than team-based leadership?"

Dramatic ministry outcomes

Drawing from extensive nationwide research, Barna has arrived at some conclusions in his book that will be the basis for seminars he will be holding in 45 markets across the U.S. within the next ten months. One key conclusion is that those churches which partner small groups of lay persons who have complementary leadership skills — such as leadership teams — experience the most dramatic ministry outcomes.

"Most pastors do not view themselves as being called or gifted as leaders," Barna noted. His recent survey revealed that less than one-quarter of them believe they are leaders; most say they have been gifted to teach and preach.

The study discovered that only one out of every ten churches has viable teams leading the church's ministry. Pastors who are leaders are somewhat less likely to use team leadership than are other pastors, striving to provide all of the leadership by themselves or appointing other individuals, with leadership capacity, to supplement their own efforts.

The value of leadership teams was demonstrated in a variety of churches studied by Barna that rely upon teams rather than gifted individuals working alone. Among the benefits of having lay teams are: reduced dependence upon the pastor; elimination of the need for leaders to be broadly skilled "superheroes"; diminished stress experienced by leaders; and heightened synergy. Barna also noted that teams provide a means of reducing leader burnout.

Four types of leaders

"The ideal scenario is when the leadership team combines four different types of leaders: a visionary motivator, a strategic decision-maker, a team-builder who mobilizes people around vision and tasks, and one who oversees the operational aspects of the team's work. Working as a close-knit unit, such a partnership maximizes individual capabilities while compensating for individual weaknesses," explained Barna.

"Internal politics, the fear of change, congregational impatience and pastoral resistance" are probably the main underlying causes for most failures. Those ministries that have completed the transition, however, have been transformed by the shift in leadership. "In some cases it has truly saved the ministry of the senior pastor who, not being a leader, was constantly frustrated by the demands of leading a church, but who was freed to support church leaders through teaching and preaching once leadership teams were in place," as reported by Barna Research Online.

Falun Gong crackdown a 'mixed blessing'

CHINA (Compass) — Seven house church leaders interviewed by Compass in February said that the government crackdown on the outlawed folk religious movement, Falun Gong, has been a mixed blessing for their churches. Some house churches have found it easier to meet because local authorities have concentrated on locating Falun Gong members. But in some areas, police make no distinction between Falun Gong and other religions, rounding up members of any unregistered group. The crackdown has also caused a sharp deterioration in relations between house church leaders and official church (TSPM) pastors. The TSPM pastors have been subjected to increased pressure to act as intelligence gatherers on the house church movement.

Small, rural congregations are still the churches' heartland

Chris Herlinger

NEW YORK, N.Y. (ENI) — Despite an increase in so-called "mega-churches" (those numbering several hundred or even thousands) in the U.S., half of all congregations remain rooted in rural areas and have fewer than 100 participating adult members, a new study of U.S. churches, synagogues and mosques has concluded.

The Faith Communities Today study by Hartford Seminary, released in March, paints a complex portrait of a changing landscape for American religion, where non-Christian groups are making their mark but where institutionalized worship remains central.

"The centre of U.S. religious life is in the worship life of the congregations," Carl Dudley, one of the co-directors of the study, told ENI. "The level of commitment and energy there is where the pulse of American religious life can be found."

Surge of growth for Jews, Mormons, Muslims

But if worship remains central to the U.S. religious experience, the growing diversity of worship is remarkable. As other studies have noted, the vast majority of new congregations in the US are Evangelical Protestant, continuing a 50-year trend. But the study shows that there has been a surge in the last decade of new Jewish, Mormon, Muslim and Baha'i congregations. More than 20 per cent of new congregations belong to those faiths.

"This trend is rapidly putting a new face on American religion," the study concluded.

The five-year study is a landmark, in part because of its depth and scope: it covers 41 religious groups, many of them non-Christian. More than 14,000 congregations participated in the survey. In most cases the congregation's leader completed a questionnaire.

Organisers say the survey data apply to 90 per cent of US worshippers. (The survey can be accessed at http://FACT.hartsem.edu.)

• The study found that: The "mega-church" phenomenon is still something of an anomaly: less than 10 per cent of US congregations have more than 1000 members, and a full quarter of them have less than 50 participating adults.

• Mainline Protestant churches tend to be much smaller than Catholic churches, which are generally quite large, and the mainline Protestant churches remain heavily concentrated in towns and rural areas. Evangelical Protestant churches are growing in the suburbs, as are Jewish, Baha'i and Mormon congregations.

• U.S. religious life is moving westward: the study indicated that a majority of the new congregations built in the past decade were in the west of the U.S.; from 1966-89, the majority of new churches were built in the southern states.

Although in recent years much has been made of the decline in denominational identity, particularly at the congregational level, the study indicates that 62 per cent of congregations feel they have a distinct denominational identity.

High clarity of purpose

In general, most congregations have a high clarity of purpose, and at least half of them say they are growing in membership, with just under one-fifth of congregations reporting membership loss. Most of the growth is centred in the suburbs, where a majority of Americans live.

Church growth was linked to several factors. One was clarity of mission and purpose, another was the strictness of expectations made on members ("tough love works too," the survey states). Churches that draw clear moral boundaries, the study concluded, receive stronger financial support from their members. Social involvement was also considered important for a congregation's vitality.

Another factor contributing to growth was style of worship, which emerged as a controversial topic in the study. The study indicates that "contemporary" worship — which often incorporates the use of electronic musical instruments — has proved to be a big draw for new members, particularly younger people.

The study showed that the use of traditional practices, including candles and incense, is sharply declining, but the use of electronic guitar or bass is increasing. Older congregations are changing their worship styles to accommodate contemporary mores, but the result has taken a toll: nearly 60 per cent of churches that had changed their styles of worship reported conflicts over the issue.

"Change is costly, conflict is one of the significant costs; and the ability to deal with conflict is one of the essential capacities of adaptive congregations," said David Roozen, another of the study's co-directors. He and Dudley are faculty staff at the Hartford Seminary's Institute for Religion Research.

Winston Ching, director of congregational ministries for the Episcopal (Anglican) Church, said even his church — perhaps the one most associated with traditional forms of worship, such as incense and ritual — was having to "look for new symbols with meaning for a different generation".

"We need to redefine the symbols and how they are expressed," Ching told ENI following the news conference. "It's clear that some people are looking for something different, and that some things in the past have gotten in the way.

"The Episcopal Church has always had a spectrum of worship within its congregations, but I think now we have to enlarge the spectrum." The key, he said, was to build congregations with younger members who were attracted to the church's ethos of "faith and reason".

Like the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was among those participating in the study. The ELCA's director of news and information, John Brooks, told ENI he found little in the survey that surprised him about his denomination, saying US Lutherans remain committed to scripture as a "foundational authority" for their worship and teaching.

He also said that denominational identity remained important to Lutherans, and he reported that 80 per cent of the ELCA respondents in the survey said that their congregations clearly expressed their Lutheran heritage.

Guarding the deposit

Chapter & Verse

Al Wolters

"Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard ***what I have entrusted to him*** *for that day."* (1 Tim 1:12, NIV)

"But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day ***what has been entrusted to me.***" (1 Tim 1:12, RSV)

This verse is a familiar one, especially since it has been incorporated (in its King James version) as the refrain of a well-known hymn: "for I know whom I have believèd / and am persuaded / that he is able / to keep that which I've committed / unto him against that day."

The hymn suggests, and the NIV backs this up, that Paul is talking about God keeping something safe until the great day of the Lord's return — something that the apostle has entrusted to God. But the RSV has quite a different wording. According to RSV, the thing which God will guard is not something entrusted by Paul to God, but by God to Paul — hardly the same thing. How is it possible that the same text can be translated in such contradictory ways?

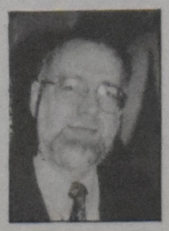
Paul's usage

The answer is that the original Greek says literally "my deposit," which could mean either the deposit I give in trust to someone else, or the deposit someone else gives in trust to me. In the jargon of the grammarians, the Greek word translated "my" could be either an "objective genitive" or a "subjective genitive." Everyone agrees that both meanings are possible, but which one did Paul intend? Interpreters have disagreed about this question for a long time, and their disagreement is reflected in the Bible versions I have quoted.

In my own opinion, the RSV is probably right: Paul is talking about something which God entrusted to him, not the other way around. One reason why I prefer this interpretation is Paul's use of this same terminology elsewhere. There are only two other places in his letters where he uses the Greek word for "deposit" (*paratheke*), and in both cases it is clear that he is talking about something entrusted to an early Christian leader. The first place is 1 Tim 6:20: "Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care" (literally "guard the deposit"). The second place is 2 Tim 1:14, just two verses after the one we are discussing: "Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you" (literally simply "guard the good deposit"). Presumably, the deposit of which the apostle is speaking in these three closely related passages (note that all of them also speak of "guarding" the deposit) is the same thing in each case.

The apostolic tradition

But what is this mysterious "deposit" which Timothy and Paul have both received, and which must be guarded, not only by the recipients themselves during their lifetime, but also by God until the great Day of the Lord? I believe the key to the answer is found in 1 Tim 1:13, the verse which comes between the two verses mentioning the deposit. There Paul says: "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus." He is talking about the apostolic tradition, the basic instruction concerning Jesus Christ which the apostles handed on to their followers, and which was to constitute the foundation of the church ever after. In other words, to put it in the words of the currently most authoritative dictionary of New Testament Greek, the *paratheke* or deposit of which Paul is speaking in these passages is "the spiritual heritage entrusted to the orthodox Christian," a spiritual heritage which was inseparable from sound teaching. Paul was confident in his day, as we may be in ours, that God would guard that deposit, despite all the heresies and distortions which would attend it, until the Second Coming. But this confidence does not diminish, but rather increases, the urgency with which Timothy in his day, and we in ours, are exhorted in our turn to guard that same deposit of sound teaching which the apostles bequeathed to the church of all ages.



Al Wolters teaches Bible and the biblical languages at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario. He is indebted for the above to one of his heroes among contemporary biblical scholars, the Reformed exegete Herman Ridderbos.

Reflection

Radio Ga-ga

"I'd sit alone and watch your light
My only friend through teenage nights
And everything I had to know
I heard it on my radio." — Queen

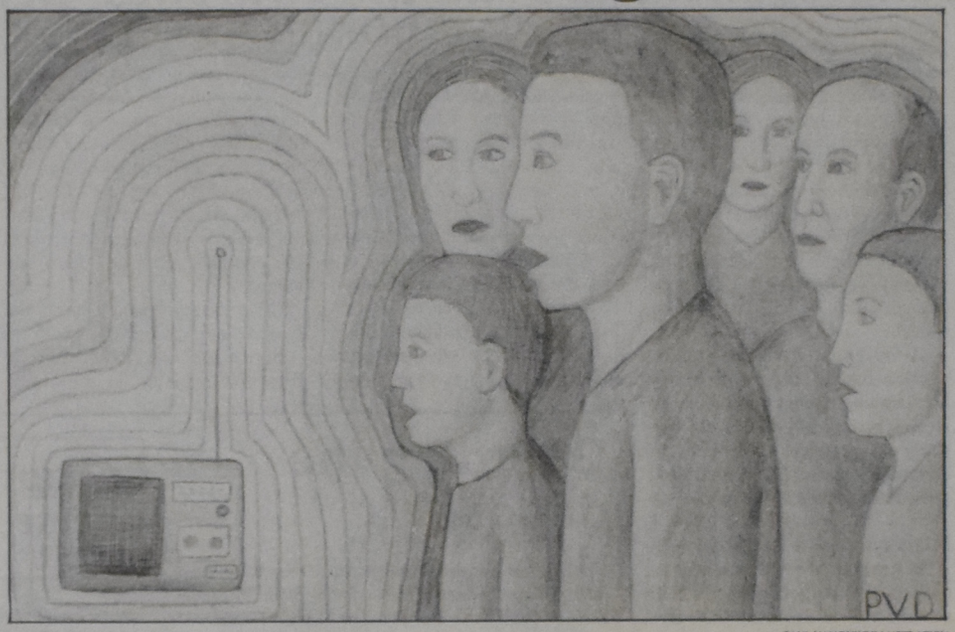
Ron de Boer

When I was growing up, radio was a more significant medium in my family's life than television. While our TV watching was limited by the availability of only two channels — one of them fuzzy — radio was everywhere, providing an audio backdrop to our farmhouse kitchen as well as the barn, where, as far I was concerned, I had to spend too much time doing chores.

Radio just doesn't get much attention anymore. Most media writers spend their time complaining about TV shows, beer commercials and computer websites, but today, I'm going to reflect on radio and the tremendous impact that talking box played in my life. In fact, it was radio that taught me my first lesson on the incredible power of the media. More on that later. First, a glimpse of my life in front of the airwaves.

Cheerful voices emerged from fog

When I was a kid in the late '60s and '70s, school mornings meant shivering around the kitchen wood-stove while our feet thawed out and my mother cooked porridge to fill our bellies for the 1 ½ hour journey on the school bus. Through this early morning fog emerged the cheerful voices of the CFOS radio announcers who chattered about the snow drifting in off Georgian Bay and whether or not Wiarton Willy would poke out his snout and grant us an early spring. The news came on at 7:15 a.m. just about the time we sprinkled brown sugar on our porridge and my father came clunking in from the barn. Ed Eldred's Sports came on at 7:20 a.m., and my father shushed us as he leaned back in his chair to catch the Junior B results from the night before. The only time the radio was turned off was for the reading of the *Today* booklet.



PAUL VANDYKE ILLUSTRATION

A snow day!

Some winter mornings we'd hear the roar of the studio snow plow — which meant the school cancellations were going to be read. Every school in the province was listed except Derby Public School — where my brothers and I attended. And then finally, "All Derby Township school buses not running today." Hallelujah! A snow day! Across the kitchen we heard a deep sigh — it was my mother, who now faced the daunting task of keeping us out of trouble for a day.

On the clear days, if we were still around to hear the 7:40 a.m. Sports Report, we knew we would be late for the bus. Our entire morning routine was measured by the radio. When the commercials gave way to the 7:30 news, we had better be making our way up the long laneway because — being the sons of Dutch immigrants who walked five miles to school (uphill both ways) — we weren't getting a ride unless a tornado was twisting across the fields toward us.

Being farmers, my parents stayed tuned to the radio because their daily activities counted on exact knowledge of temperature, rainfall and snow squalls. If Weatherman Bernie said today was going to be sunny throughout Grey county, my father knew he could turn the hay over or spread manure behind the orchard. If the long-range forecast called for a few days of rain, my father might have to keep with the haying long into the evening or cancel a family day trip to Niagara Falls to finish a field.

Several different radios served as my companions when I was growing up. There was the transistor with the little white ear piece I got one year for my birthday. There was the pickup truck radio that picked up certain stations depending on where it was parked on the farm. And there was the radio in the gutted television/hi-fi/radio cabinet that found its way into my bedroom after a lengthy existence beneath the cuckoo clock in the living room. But it was our kitchen radio with which I attach the strongest memory.

I had a very strange personal relationship with that old off-white Westinghouse radio sitting on the chestnut-colored china cabinet. That radio had a personality — or rather, multiple personalities. Whenever I looked at it, I felt it was a different radio, depending on the time of day and the types of voices coming out of it. In the afternoons, for example, when Anne Murray — my father's favorite — or Tommy Hunter crooned the popular songs of the day, and when furniture store commercials came out, the radio seemed like a boring, listless creature — an adult — telling lame jokes and prattling on about tedious grown-up things: where to get your car tires replaced and at what nursery the best flower seeds could be found. You'd never hear a sports report or a Rolling Stones tune during the afternoon.

Talking directly to me

In the evenings, the songs were a little better, and so the radio seemed younger — talking directly to me. Later in the evening, as I searched the AM dial for the Boston Bruins, I came across sporting events from all over — as far away as Detroit and New York. As I stared into the little dots in the plastic, from which emanated the excitable voices of play-by-play announcers, the radio was more than an off-white plastic box you plugged into the wall. It was a tunnel to the rest of the world.

On Sunday nights, I rested my chin on the edge of the china cabinet and listened to the faint voices of the Boston announcers, who always seemed to fade into a distant hiss just as Peter McNab or Phil Esposito was bearing in on Ken Dryden, that unbeatable Montreal Canadians goaltender. The play-by-play announcers could paint a picture of a hockey game for radio listeners that was so vivid, you were sitting in the gold seats at the Boston "Gawden."

Picassos of words

The good announcers were Picassos of words, using vivid adjectives and strong verbs to describe Dryden's crouch as he stared down Espo, who came flying in off the left wing boards, hair flying, Cashman or O'Rielly storming the far post for a rebound which inevitably "squirted" away from or "trickled" through the goalie. No longer in my kitchen, I would gnaw the corner of the china cabinet with my lower teeth, furrows that still exist in the finish today and the taste of which I can summon in a second.

The radio in the barn was a whole other beast. Fly speckled, that old Zenith was victim of many a white-washing and lived to tell the latest news. Sitting on a beam over the feed box in the main area of the milking parlor, the barn radio came on automatically when the lights were flicked on and the cows moseyed into their stalls for milking. The Zenith managed to pick up the local CBC feed, so there were always voices in the barn, even when my father worked silently and methodically down each row of cows, fitting on or taking off the milkers, pouring the steaming milk into the galvanized pails that my brothers and I hauled off to the milk house.

Not the best farm-boy

I was not the best farm-boy, and was probably the prime reason my father sold the farm and moved to the city when I hit my teens. As a kid, I could never keep up with feeding and cleaning the cows' udders. Instead, I listened to the CBC radio dramas that played in the evenings. Characters and faraway cities spilled out into that grey and shadowy barn in full color, the deep voices of the male leads and the sometimes eerie sound effects of the Friday night mysteries, resonating long after the lights had been clicked off. My father's impatient calls from under a cow would break me out of these radio reveries, and the pictures, of course, would fade away. I would sigh, pick up the wash cloth and try to scrub the manure off a cow's teats. Occasionally, when my imagination couldn't move beyond the ceiling cobwebs and stray cats lapping milk from the hub-cap, I was overwhelmed by the drabness of our old barn. Radio took me to places outside of myself, but radio also constantly reminded me where I was, and as a restless kid turning into a teen, "where I was" wasn't where I wanted to be! I confess to punching a cow right in the face during one of these lows.

Unaware at the time, however, I later discovered that radio was helping me exercise my imagination. Like with reading, radio forces one to use the imagination, to picture the greasy-haired villain that belonged to the scruffy voice during Fright Night on CFOS, to imagine Terry O'Rielly sitting blood-stained in the penalty box after tossing knuckles with Dave "The Hammer" Schultz at the Spectrum in Philadelphia, to conjure up images of the war-torn streets of a distant Asian country where reporters with funny voices spoke rapidly of death-counts. Now I write about those terrible, boring days on the farm as if they are radio plays, distant memories as idyllic as a scene from a Norman Rockwell calendar.

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Home of confidence

It was radio, too, that taught me my first lesson on the power of media — and perhaps set in motion a cynicism about the media that seems only to deepen the older I get. In the summer of 1975, I discovered CFTR, which was the hottest new rock and roll radio station in Toronto. Paul Godfrey in the mornings, Doc Holliday in the evenings. You could count on the deejays to be funny and the music to carry you off on warm summer evenings.

Millions having fun

In the summer of 1978, CFTR advertised for the CNE — the Canadian National Exhibition — what seemed like every five minutes. Godfrey was right there at the CNE — you could hear millions of people having fun like no one had ever had fun before in Canada — as Godfrey told me I was missing the chance of a lifetime if I didn't get down to the Ex, always punctuating his ads with his trademark, "Shine on!" I can still sing the CNE jingle: "The CNE is a wonderful place, where everyone laughs and wears a smile on their face...."

That summer, the more I heard those people having fun and the longer I listened to Godfrey talking about the great prizes being given away every day, the more I truly believed the CNE was the promised land, flowing with cream soda and candy apples. You could win stuffed animals the size of your father and scream yourself inside out on roller coasters with names like The Twister and Rocket Machine.

I pestered my parents every chance I got, and finally they found a day between hay season and fall harvest and carted us off to the wide highways of Toronto. We wandered around with eyes the size of paper plates, staring at the odd collection of game hucksters and ride carnies who smiled at us, enticing us to try our luck. My brother agreed with me that working at the Ex had to be the best job to which anyone could possibly aspire. We breathed in the aromatic smell of fried onions and candy floss; we stared heavenward at the coasters painted brightly against the sky.

The magic of radio

And then I saw it — the CFTR Road Van. It was blue with oversized speakers blaring Nazareth and Led Zeppelin and the unmistakable crystal clear voice of Godfrey, the fast talkin' rock and rollin' voice of Toronto himself. We approached the van with awe, cupping our hands to the tinted windows. But all I could see was some kind of studio inside, a counter with lots of dials, and a microphone.

But no Paul Godfrey.

The van was empty. Then a blond woman in shorts and a yellow bathing top appeared and asked us to fill out a ballot to win tickets to some concert. We could win CFTR t-shirts, too!

"It sounds like he's right here," I said, shyly, glancing at the tinted window.

"The magic of radio," the woman laughed. "Sound effects," she said, handing us CFTR buttons which we pinned to our chests. "They don't have time to be down here all summer."

I'd be lying if I said the rest of the day was ruined. I ate junk food like a boy returned from the wilderness, shot the stream of water at the target to get my rocket to the top, and whined a few more bucks out of my parents to win a stuffed animal. But these memories are seen as through a haze. It is that big empty fake radio I remember every time I see one of those Radio Station vans parked at a furniture store on a Saturday morning or at Oktoberfest each year, reminding me that the media isn't always what it seems to be.

Radio lost its magic

Today the radio has lost its magic for me. No longer do I feel I've accomplished something amazing finding radio feeds from faraway American cities — I can now listen to any radio station in the world through the Internet. No longer do I have to search for the Boston Bruins on the AM radio dial — most games are available via satellite on my television. No longer do I have to wait for top 10 hits on my favorite station — I can get any song I want off the Internet and burn it onto a CD. No longer are the deejays and sportscasters mysterious, faceless entities — radio personalities appear on TV commercials and on billboards in marketing strategies that are slick and overdone.

One of my kids asked for a television in her bedroom the other day. Instead, we gave her a radio. She listens to Friday night Kitchener Ranger hockey games and falls asleep to "Lovers and Other Strangers," a local FM program which showcases stories, poems, and easy listening music. She lies awake in the semi-dark of her room and is lost in a distant gaze, allowing the power of the spoken word, sound and music to mesmerize her.

Perhaps radio hasn't lost its magic after all. Perhaps, like my daughter, when you don't care how it works or what big evil plan the marketers have in mind with their programming, the magic can still abound. Perhaps, as the Queen song says, we'll someday return from the land of the visual and allow radio to engage our imaginations once again.

"Let's hope you never leave, old friend
Like all good things on you we depend
So stick around 'cos we might miss you
When we grow tired of all this visual.
All we need is radio ga-ga, radio goo-goo" — Queen

Passing on generational nuggets

Getting Unstuck
Arlene Van Hove

Our family has gone full circle. My oldest daughter and her two toddlers walked over to her Oma's (my mother's) house for morning coffee the other day. She remarked how relaxing her visit was. Her children played with the same toys so many grandchildren and great-grandchildren have done before them. I felt nostalgic as I listened to her.

From a time gone by

I used to visit my mother at least once a week when I had toddlers. I rarely telephoned to tell her I was coming. Somehow, she was always there. Somehow, she always had time for coffee. I think back to those times and marvel at the simplicity of it. She stayed home to raise a family like most women in those days. She had a housekeeping routine that was dependable yet flexible. I never felt I was in the way. Sometimes I would stay for lunch and nap a bit on the couch. Soon my younger siblings would come home and mother would have tea and cookies ready. She thrived on the noise and rhythm of family life. Anyone could drop by unannounced and rest a while. It all seemed so carefree, unhurried and effortless.

I think the nostalgic feelings I have about the "old days" is the reason our culture is so fond of "country" or "cottage" type home furnishings and decorating accessories. It reflects a time when life was more simple and basic. Or so we think.

Generational nuggets

Every generation has its joys and sorrows. The culture of the fifties and sixties was built on the ashes of the second world war. Many people found joy and satisfaction in hard work and family life. But life is rarely easy and uncomplicated. And if it is, we tend to seek further challenges to satisfy our need for internal growth and development. Consequently, the world changes as we change.

Still, sometimes it is helpful to look back. There is a whole generation of immigrant parents on the verge of leaving us. What can we learn from those who so courageously left their homes in Europe to go to a strange land never expecting to see their loved ones again? What is it they may want to leave behind that can help the next generation as well as the generation after them?

High expectations breeds discontent

In a popular old film *On Golden Pond*, an aging father comments to his daughter, who is struggling with marital difficulties, that in his day spouses did not have such high expectations of each other. They were content with less.This is meaningful advice in an age of plenty, in which we are bombarded daily with how good life could be if we had this kind of merchandise or this kind of relationship. Consequently, our expectations of what life should offer us sets us up for discontent.

Symptoms of this modern day malady are chronic irritability, ongoing annoyance and an overall feeling of dissatisfaction. If we find ourselves in this space it may help us to do some honest soul searching. What expectations do we have of life and how are they tied to our general feeling of unhappiness? Are these expectations realistic? Are they life affirming? Do they fit with our faith values? What may we need to change so that we can enjoy life again?

In the meantime, I am going to my mother's for my weekly morning coffee. Sadly, she is a widow now, but I enjoy the stillness of her home. It is soothing and comforting. A wonderful antidote to my busy and hurried life. On second thought, I may want to pass this generational gift on to my children and grandchildren. A haven in a frantic and tumultuous world.

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

A discussion starter

Here's a discussion starter, excerpted from Lloyd Mackey's **doing politics christianly:**

Recently columnist Barbara Yaffe wrote in *The Vancouver Sun* about her Jewish grandparents who were ordered off their land by the Bolsheviks during the Russian Revolution. They ended up in Canada, where her grandfather worked as a streetsweeper and newspaper peddler and her grandmother took in sewing. By the end of their lives, they owned — and superintended — a Montreal apartment building.

The subject of her column was "The two faces of oppressed peoples." She was comparing the way her Jewish forbears handled oppression — and the results — with that of North American aboriginals.

Writing with obvious care, and sensitive to the potential for triumphalism, Yaffe suggested that Jews value individualism and seek to be part of mainstream society. Aboriginals prefer collectivist living and a way of life distinct from the mainstream. She suggests that government money has sustained that isolation — and contributed to the continuing oppression. She does not say so, but I would suggest that the Jewish approach she outlines grows, in part at least, out of traditions steeped in the messages of the Old Testament prophets.

To be fair to Mackey, his remarks are part of a column contrasting Marxist, collectivist policy with free enterprise. What do you think?

Memories

The bully

Harry der Nederlanden

Mrs. Hardwicke, our Grade 5 teacher, radiated all the manly toughness needed to wean Grade 5 boys from the feminine culture of elementary school and prepare them for grade six and bald-headed Principal Pott. She had the eyes of a cop, the shoulders of a steer wrestler and the expression of a public health nurse about to administer tetanus shots. She also had a little mustache. She was a monstrosity designed to confuse boys: the vengeful father in the guise of a woman. She parodied all the manly virtues to which we aspired and she employed them to diminish us.

"You'd better watch Jimmy," she said solemnly, as if delivering a message from home. "He's a bully!"

HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATION

Whimpering like kittens

Only a couple of weeks into the year, we were licked, whimpering and mewling like newborn kittens, and there were some pretty tough characters in our class. One of them, Henry Slowskowski, came late almost every day in Grade 4 and he didn't give a rip. Another used to draw pictures on the wall of dogs mating and he even signed his name – "Dirty Dog". And then there was Jimmy. But Hardwicke put a stop to all that.

Once every two or three weeks, she'd spring a pogrom on us boys and all fifteen of us would find ourselves out in the hall being strapped en masse for something we considered our inalienable right. Like peeing against the back of the outdoor john. We'd been doing that ever since Grade 1. You only went inside if you were really desperate, and then you tried to hold your breath the entire time.

Our demoralization was not total, however. We'd always been able to count on Jimmy. There was still hope.

Jimmy is a bully.

How do I know? His sister, Nails, told Mrs. Hardwicke and the entire class the first week of school. She's a year older than Jimmy but she missed a grade when they lived up north in the bush. Her real name is Nelly, but she'd earned the nickname Nails. Nails, a nervous, sharp-nosed gal with darting eyes, put up her hand when Mrs. Hardwicke was in the middle of "laying down the law" one morning.

Startled, Hardwicke, or Hardwhack, as we called her out on the playground (way, way out on the playground), stopped mid-sentence and stared at Nails.

Nails stood up beside her desk. "You'd better watch Jimmy," she said solemnly, as if delivering a message from home. "He's a bully!"

Soul X-ray

Hardwicke seemed stunned. She forgot what she'd been saying. She looked at Jimmy and so did we. Jimmy looked back at us and gave us a bright, innocent smile. And then he nodded.

That sealed his doom as far as Hardwicke was concerned. She'd just received a definitive glimpse into Jimmy's soul. We all heard the click, saw the flash and then the darkness. Jimmy had been X-rayed. Our hearts filled with pity, but Jimmy just grinned, undeterred by the shadow of fate that had just passed over him.

Mrs. Hardwicke believed in the battle between good and evil, and she'd just identified one of the adversary. Our hearts began to beat a little faster and our senses pitched a little sharper. We sensed that we were part of a larger drama. Perhaps there was still hope for our manhood.

We didn't have long to wait. Next Monday Jimmy got his first strapping. Hardwicke believed in being a step ahead of trouble. Jimmy came in from the far end of the playground — our battleground — with a bloody nose. She watched him come up the hill from the woods like a general watching the advance of the enemy. Jimmy held his head tipped back as if he were steering by the stars in the middle of the day. She met him at the door.

"What happened?" she demanded.

"Ran into a door," said Jimmy.

His reality button

He always said that after he'd been in a fight and ended up with a bloody nose, which was quite often. All it took to give him a bloody nose was a little tap. I know because I'd given him a few taps myself. Not because I didn't like him. You had to do that to a bully every so often. That was how he kept his reputation.

Usually we were on the same side, but sometimes Jimmy went a little crazy and took on everybody. His nose was his reality button, kind of like one of those satellite positioning gismos they put in cars now. All it took was one little tap to bring Jimmy back to reality.

"You've been fighting, haven't you!" It wasn't a question but an accusation. She spat out the word "fighting" as if it was something obscene and not something as natural for Grade 5 boys as...well, as peeing against the back of the outhouse.

Jimmy brought his head forward and dripped blood on the doorsill, and he repeated, almost gleefully, "Bumped into a door."

Grabbing him by the shirt, she hauled him in through the door and we watched him vanish into the darkness of the hall.

A few minutes later, we heard the first whack and the first wail.

Jimmy was a wailer. He'd wail like a banshee even before the strap connected with the palm of his hand. We didn't know what a banshee was, but that's what Mrs. Hardwhack said later: "Stop wailing like a banshee!"

He was the only one who could do that without losing face. Once, in Grade 4 Henry had snickered at him for wailing so loud when he was strapped. Jimmy went up like a rocket and landed on Henry's head. It took four of us to pry him off.

Jimmy's strategy

Then Jimmy explained his strategy. "You holler real loud just before the strap hits. It scares them and throws off their aim. If you push your hand toward them a little, they end up hitting your wrist. That scares them too. Some of them stop right then and give you a wet towel."

He was the voice of experience speaking; after all, he was the bully. When he spoke we listened. But none of us had the guts to risk our reputation that way. We strove for heroic stoicism.

Hardwhack undermined our manliness by sending us straight back into the classroom afterward, where we walked in with all the girls smirking at us, looking for signs of weakness they knew were there. Hardwicke was fiendishly clever. She always strapped little Gary Sloboda ("Sobalot Sloboda") first, so when we stumbled back into the room, our hands huge and heavy as porcupines killed on the highway, our manfully erected defenses were eroded by Gary's pitiful sobbing, and soon we were sobbing along, our faces red with the strain of trying to bottle it in, our noses blowing snot-bubbles. What humiliation! The girls turned away in disgust. After that they only fraternized with Grade 6 boys.

Hardwicke's next pogrom came for tying girls to trees. She'd tried to ban the practice, but the girls we caught usually didn't mind – until Jimmy talked us into capturing his sister. Nails didn't actually squeal, but she hollered so loud, we were discovered. Hardwhack would have strapped all fifteen of us again, except bald Pott rescued four boys who had been helping him clear his garden that noon hour.

A breeding ground for the adversary

But she got them next time. Hardwicke had done research and she discovered that most of the woods weren't actually school property, so she issued her next edict: the woods were declared off-limits. The woods, she figured, were a breeding ground for the adversary; all sorts of illicit things went on under the concealment of the trees. She'd have mowed them down to the ground if she could.

Bald Pott came out to watch the

execution, and she put a little extra into her wind-up just to impress him. His jaw dropped in awe as he watched her mow us down one at a time. I think he was jealous. Or maybe he was worried. Rumor was she wanted his job.

Her blood was up when she came back into the room. "Stop that blubbering!" she ordered. "Or I'll give you ten more!" Immediately the room fell silent – except for Jimmy. He blew long and loudly into his big red handkerchief. Hardwicke glared at him and trembled with agitation. And so did we.

A honk of defiance

Jimmy rearranged his hanky and honked again. It was a honk of defiance. The battle was on.

She nailed him again that same afternoon.

Jimmy was a borrower. He never had a thing of his own. His dad worked way up north on the Do-line, he said, and his mother had no money. So he borrowed – pencils, erasers, paper, books, hankies, mittens, candies, lunches, and scissors. That's what he'd borrowed this time – Melissa's scissors. And Melissa, golden haired Melissa, Melissa the beautiful, had a wicked streak. Jimmy worshipped her from afar. That's why he often borrowed her stuff. It gave him a chance to talk to her. "Lemme use your scissors!" It was useless to say No, because by that time he had appropriated them and wasn't about to give up that advantage.

It was art period. We had art about once a month and we were cutting up colored paper into long strips. Nobody was sure why. We figured Hardwicke would explain in her good time. Jimmy was really into it, cutting like a maniac.

Suddenly we heard Melissa's plaintive whine: "Please, Mrs. Hardwickee (she always pronounced the 'e' at the end because Hardwicke liked that; we didn't), Jimmy stole my scissors and he won't give them back."

"Jimmy Flint!" barked Hardwicke. "Return those scissors at once!"

Jimmy went on cutting furiously, his tongue jutting from the corner of his mouth. He didn't even look up. The silence and the suspense was just like in a Jungle Jim movie when the panther is creeping up on Jim and you're waiting for it to pounce and for Jim to look up.

"Out!" Hardwicke bellowed so loud we all levitated. "Out in the hall!"

Jimmy finished his cutting, calmly returned the scissors to Melissa and walked, strolled, toward the door. He had nerves of steel. At the door, he paused, looked back at the class – *and wiggled his ears.*

A connoisseur of straps

Hardwicke strode, no, stomped, to her armory and hurled open the door. Hanging on the inside of the door on five little hooks were five straps. They swung wildly back and forth as if they had a life of their own. Each one was a little different. Hardwicke was a connoisseur of straps. She'd collected them from all over the country. The last one was the longest and was covered with tiny knobs. It came from Ottawa: Mackenzie King had used it to beat off the devil, Henry's older brother said. He'd been whacked with it too. That was the one she selected for Jimmy.

We held our collective breath and waited, ready to start counting. In the past, we'd often done so gleefully, sometimes even out loud and in unison. But this time we recognized what was at stake and we were appropriately solemn.

We counted: one...two... three.... And then we realized something remarkable, something momentous was going on. We'd heard no wailing! We looked at one another in puzzlement, and continued counting: eight...nine... ten.... Only the sound of the strap. A pause. And then the whacks resumed. "She's switched hands," whispered Gary, his eyes big as baseballs. "She's a switch-hitter."

The door opened, and Hardwicke, not Jimmy, but Hardwicke entered. She looked flustered and sweaty. She didn't look at the class but lumbered across the room towards the windows, where she stopped and gazed off into the distance where smoke was rising from the Edmonton City Dump and the BP Oil Refinery. With a shock we saw that Hardwicke was getting old. A wisp of her steel-gray hair had come loose, and she lifted her hands to tuck it back behind one of her oyster shell combs. Then she realized she was still holding the strap, and for a moment she looked confused. Wearily, she turned and slouched back to her desk, tossed it into her drawer and sat down. Heavily.

When she looked up, we all quickly returned to our paper cutting. Ten minutes later we had cut up all the colored paper in the room. Some of the more ambitious kids were starting on the books when Hardwicke stood up.

"What are you doing?" she snapped at tall, freckly Sheila, who immediately dropped her scissors. Sheila's lips started quivering. Hardwicke had never snapped at girls before.

Hardwicke patted her shoulder gently. "I think you have enough of those, dear. It's time for the glue!"

Casually, in a kind of aside, she said to Henry, "Would you please let Mr. Flint back into the room."

We boys hardly dared to look at Jimmy as he slowly sauntered back in, but all the girls lifted their heads like prairie dogs, their heads rotating as one. Hardwicke rapped a ruler on her desk. She began to explain that we were now going to glue the strips back together on a black sheet of paper. Roy, sitting behind me, groaned, "Why'd we cut it in the first place?"

I snickered and suddenly felt Hardwicke's flintlike eyes on me. But then the room grew very still, and her eyes shifted, her eyebrows arched and her lips pinched together like a vise.

Jimmy, who sat at the end of the middle row, had his hand raised high.

Hardwicke glared at him as if waiting for him to put it down.

"What is it now, Mr. Flint?"

Another strap, please

"Can I please have another strap?"

Hardwicke stared at him in disbelief and didn't answer.

"I need the scissors again," Jimmy explained, standing up. "Give me the strap now, and then I can keep them for a while."

Hardwicke locked eyes with him. First her face grew kind of blurry, but then it hardened in determination. Slowly her left arm went up and she pointed toward the door. After school Henry said her finger trembled, but I didn't see it.

"Out!" she trumpeted. "Out!" And she whipped open her drawer and groped for her weapon.

The battle was far from over. The school year was once again full of possibilities, drama on a large scale.

Yes, Jimmy was a real bully. He was surrounded by an aura of danger and excitement. We looked at each other and grinned.

After school we all lined up and peed against the back of the outhouse.

This is an absolutely true story. Names were changed to protect the guilty. There were none innocent.

The Kiss

"May I give you a kiss? I don't mean a passionate kiss, but a grateful one..." He stretched out his arms and, although I was a married woman, I bent down to receive my reward.

I was married to Fred, who served a church in the town of Simcoe. One of our elderly parishioners was very ill and had been transferred from the local hospital to London. Fred wanted to visit him and asked me to come along.

When I entered the hospital room, I was shocked by the sight of his old frail body. It had once been so active, healthy and strong. He had emphysema, and his breathing was labored. His cheeks were sunken, and his eyes were bleak. He weighed less than a hundred pounds. The stark white linen on the bed almost matched his pale face.

Scruffy and unkempt

Furthermore, he had not been shaved for a couple of days. The grey prickly beard made him look scruffy and unkempt. He told us that his wife was planning to visit that afternoon.

Why had no one taken a razor to his face? His wife should not see him like this, I thought. However, these amenities are often not provided in a busy hospital setting and he was too weak to do the job himself.

My mind raced back to the many times I had plugged in razors when I worked in geriatrics; impulsively I offered to shave off his beard. His eyes lit up.

"Would you?"

"Of course I will!"

He pointed to the drawer beside the bed, and I opened it. I was aghast.

There was no electric razor but a shaving brush, a soap dish and a sharp-edged razor.

'How are you going to handle *that*?'

My husband nudged me and said, "How are you going to handle *that* one?"

"Will you help me?" I begged

"No," he said, "I didn't offer to do it. You did."

Then I prayed under my breath, "Lord, help, I can't do this alone."

I asked my husband to leave the room. If he wasn't willing to assist, I didn't need or want an onlooker or a critical eye. He obliged, leaving behind his lady in distress.

I prayed a quick prayer — again. Then I took a towel and draped it around the old man's neck. I soaked a hot facecloth and spread it on his face to soften the prickly stubble. A large glass served as a bowl in which to rinse the razor.

I rolled up my sleeves.

I took the soap dish, warmed up the brush and lathered his face. It called for a steady hand. Slowly and with great care I began to shave the bearded man from the cheekbone down to the neck, like a miniature snowplough pushing its way through a snowdrifted road. Up and down, up and down.

I gave the orders: "Blow up your left cheek. Now stick your tongue under your top lip. Now under the bottom one. Blow up the right cheek. Hold steady...."

Almost professionally I swished the foam-clogged razor in the glass, leaving behind a rich, grey harvest. Systematically I went from the far left to the far right.

I couldn't believe my eyes; I had taken off the beard without drawing a trace of blood. Taking a warm cloth, I gently wiped off the extra foam, then dried his face.

He looked ten years younger and shone like an apple.

My husband timed it just right; to his surprise, when he returned, his "lady barber" was sitting by the bed of a very grateful man.

That's when I got the reward: a kiss, a simple kiss. But it was a kiss I'll never forget.

Would the "lady barber" who sent me this story please send me her name so I can give her credit. Her cover letter went lost. My apologies.

Lent

John's Story

Brian Walsh

Mary is right, you know.

We were incredulous. And we were afraid.

So we locked the doors. Wouldn't you?

Think of it for a moment. All of our dreams and hopes had been crushed. The one whom we had come to believe was nothing less than the Messiah of Israel had been cruelly executed on a Roman cross. Just another misguided Palestinian insurrectionist. And the leaders of our people had conspired to make this happen. Our own community had been torn apart, betrayed from within.

Then Peter and I had actually gone to the tomb and found that it was empty. And now comes Mary Magdalene to tell us that she has seen the Lord — risen from the dead!

So we didn't believe her. It was a hysterical vision, we said, some kind of self-induced wish-fulfillment or something.

We locked the doors. Who knows, maybe this missing body business is going to rebound on us, and the religious authorities would come and do to us what they did to the Lord.

It was evening. The day had started in pre-dawn darkness and now slipped into the dusk of evening. No one was saying very much. We were just sitting there in our grief, our fear, our confusion, our shock.

And then he was there!

Locked doors might keep the authorities out, but they couldn't hold back the risen Christ — no more than that cold tomb and large stone. We were already a pretty terrified group of people, but this... this was just the thing to put us over the edge.

Before we could freak out, however, Jesus greeted us gently, "Shalom alekem." "Peace be with you." Peace. Not fear, not grief, not confusion, not shock. But peace. Shalom!

As our fear started to fade, he came over and dispelled our doubts by showing us his hands and his side.

There could be no question. This was our Lord. The one who had been crucified was now risen from the dead and standing in our very midst.

Then we understood the shining countenance of Mary when she announced that she had seen him. Our tears were turned into joy, our mourning became laughter.

Rembrandt's painting: The Risen Christ showing His wound to the Apostle Thomas (1634).

Again he said to us, "Shalom alekem." Peace be with you. And then he said three astonishing things to us that opened up to us what it means to be bearers of his shalom. He made it clear to us what it meant to now follow him — the risen Christ.

First he said, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

Remember for a minute everything else that Jesus has said about his relationship with the Father:

— The Father and I are one.

— I am in the Father and the Father is in me.

— Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing.

— I have come not to do my own will, but the will of the Father.

— Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

And now he says to us, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." The risen One came into our midst to tell us that his death — and even his resurrection — was not the end of the story.

The same things he dared say about himself he now says about us. "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" *means* that when the world sees you, the world sees me.

It's almost as if he is saying that the incarnation — the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us — does not end with the resurrection. It doesn't even end with the ascension of Christ to be with the Father. It continues. The Word still takes on flesh and blood in our world. But it is *our* flesh and *our* blood. *We* are now the body of Christ.

And Jesus sends us to be his body in the same place that the Father sent him — in the world! Remember: "For God so loved *the world* that he gave his only Son!" And now Jesus is saying that *he* loves the world so much that he sends us to be his presence, his body, his hope and healing for that very same world.

Of course, you can't be sent out into the world if the doors are locked. You have to unlock the doors of a fearful, private and closed-in faith and move out into the open with a joyful, public and opened-up faith. That is, a faith opened up to the redemption of the world. This is something we only began to understand that evening with Jesus. The redemption of the world, and us having a role in that redemption? What could this mean?

Actually, Mary's story already gave us a hint. Remember how a number of themes came together? It was at the dawn of a new day and in a garden; in fact, she mistook Jesus for the gardener. It made her wonder whether all of this was about the rebirth of creation. Well, what Jesus said and did next, confirmed that she was on the right track. In fact, it gave me the idea for the beginning of my whole gospel.

After telling us, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you," Jesus came over to us and, well, he *breathed* on us. And as he did so, he said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." This was the second, astonishing, provocative, amazing — I'm running out of words to describe this — thing that Jesus said.

If everything till now wasn't enough to remind us of the Garden of Eden in Genesis, then this symbolic act of breathing on us sort of hit us over the head with the similarities. You remember the story, don't you? How God created the first human out of the dust of the ground and then breathed into him the breath of life. And now here the resurrected Jesus in our midst did the same thing. In that room, on Easter evening, Jesus took this small group of broken-hearted people longing for the redemption of the world and made us into a new humanity.

A new humanity. A restoration of the image of God. New creatures for a new creation. This is what his resurrection is all about.

Then he got specific and told us what we were to do with our new humanity. In his third, and final, astonishing saying, Jesus said, "If you forgive anyone their sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

You know, the religious leaders used to get awfully upset when Jesus presumed to have the authority to forgive sins. Now he tells us that it is precisely that authority and that mission that he gives to the new humanity embodied in the church, the people of God.

"As the Father sent me, so I send you" *means* that we are called to continue the reconciling ministry of Jesus — a ministry of forgiveness.

This is an awesome ministry and a high calling. Jesus made sure that we knew just how high the stakes were by saying that if we do not engage in this ministry of forgiveness, then people won't be forgiven.

So we need to get busy with this task of forgiveness. Without forgiveness there can be no peace. Without knowing that all of our brokenness, all of our hang-ups, all of our failures, all of our sin, is *forgiven*, we will never experience that deep peace in our relation with God, our neighbor, or ourselves. Indeed, without forgiveness, there can be no life. And what this risen Jesus is all about is life — the life he breathed on us in the Holy Spirit — and the life we are sent to share.

But again it is a life and a forgiveness and a peace that cannot be conducted behind the locked doors of our fears. His is a resurrection that unlocks doors. It opens into our mission to be the body of the risen Christ in the world, to be the new humanity, and to proclaim and live out a gospel of forgiveness.

Dr. Brian Walsh is Christian Reformed Campus Minister at the University of Toronto and adjunct Professor of Theology at Wycliffe College, Toronto

Easter

Crucified — For Me

I stood watching: in the distance, a hill —
On which stood three crosses. I stood listening. Still.
I saw on those crosses three men, nailed to die,
And I shuddered when I heard one cry.

Was it a cry or a pain-wracked prayer?
He looked down at the soldiers gathered there
Who had nailed him on the tree, and I heard him say,
"Father, forgive them for what they did today;

"They do not know what they do!" Can it be
That that crucified One died for them and for me?
I listened. From the side another voice came,
Scolding like those looking on: "You healed the lame

And raised the dead; get down and save yourself and us."
Then the third man spoke, calmly, without fuss:
"Do you not fear God? We deserve to hang here,
But not this man." Turning, he pleaded, "Lord, be near

To me when you enter your kingdom." And then
That One spoke again: "I tell you today when
I enter my kingdom, you too shall be there.
An everlasting Paradise with me you'll share."

Several women were there, and his mother as well –
Grief-stricken. He spoke to her; I heard him tell
Her, "Woman, see your son." A disciple, dear
To both of them, was also standing near

To the cross, and nodding to him he said,
"Your mother." That day the disciple led
Her away to his home and into his care.

Then darkness fell like a shroud, everywhere.

And out of that darkness, a voice cried, "My God!
My God, why have you forsaken me?" How odd
That his own Father did not heed his call,
As he hung there. Forsaken by God and by all.
Three hours he suffered the pangs of hell.
How awful that suffering no one can tell.
Although he was thirsty, the drink he denied.
At last, he cried out, "It's finished!" and died.

When the light returned, the fight was won
Over Satan and death by God's only Son.
He'd surrendered himself to his Father's hand
And the cross, but for him this was not the end,

But a new beginning – for us as well. My heart was glad,
For I knew on the cross with his death he also had
Taken on himself my sin, my guilt, my shame –
It was for me – a sinner — my Savior came!

Now I thank him every day. But no matter how I try,
I can never thank him enough. His anguished cry
Reminds me forever of the mercy he showed, so I know
There's a place reserved for me when at life's end I go

Through the valley of death, for he went ahead of me there
To pay the price, so that all who follow him may share
The new heaven and earth, the city of God, with streets of gold,
Where in praising our Savior we'll never grow weary or old.

Fred Greidanus
Orillia, Ont.

Christ Nailed to the Cross — *an oil painting by Gerard David, from about 1480.*

Easter and spring cleaning

Intangible Things
Heidi VanDerSlikke

The sun shone today for the first time all week. I basked eagerly in its warmth by the kitchen window. Unfortunately it wasn't long before I noticed how truly dirty that window is. It hasn't been cleaned since the fall. The inside bears greasy marks from foreheads and noses pressed against the glass (and this is a household without small children). The dirty film on the outside is interrupted only by the impression of a splattered snowball Jack threw at the cat who likes to sit on the sill and beg to come in.

Backing away from the window, I noticed the layer of fine dust which had settled on the baseboards over the winter months. Where did that come from? Diverting my eyes I caught sight of numerous cobwebs dangling lazily from various nooks and crannies. As much as I appreciated the sunshine, none of these unsightly features was nearly so visible in the dismal light of the average winter afternoon.

How spring cleaning started

I remember hearing a speaker say that the tradition of spring cleaning began with the Jews. Up until then I believed it originated with my mother-in-law, whose house is in a state of perpetual cleanliness. Anyway, this lady said that spring cleaning was part of preparation for the Passover. Jewish women would purge their homes of all leftover food and supplies to facilitate a brand new start. For this reason many Christian women aim to have their spring cleaning complete by Easter. Except me. I do well to have it done by Labor Day.

Nevertheless spring has always been a special season to me. I still get a rush from the first warm breezes that blow across my face. They sweep me back to the exhilaration I felt as a kid when I was allowed to go out with a spring jacket instead of a heavy winter coat. How weightless my feet would feel in shoes instead of boots. And then there was Easter — time off from school, lots of chocolate treats and usually something new to wear.

A different significance

These days Easter holds a different significance for me. Long ago I noticed striking similarities between housekeeping and my faith life. Just like springtime sunlight exposes all of the filth that has accumulated over the winter. I remember well how Christ's entry into my life illuminated a pile of trash I had to deal with. How did that get there? Housecleaning so often seems like a futile task. You get something cleaned up and it only gets dirty again. And how is it possible that your clean refrigerator only draws attention to your grimy oven?

Sin, like housework, can overwhelm us

The struggle with sin is like that, isn't it? Take care of one issue and God shows you another. Think you've got that window clean? Go inside and for sure you'll notice a great big ugly streak you've missed. Relentless and sometimes frustrating, what choice do you have but to persevere? After all perseverance builds character. Besides, if we give up against sin (or housework for that matter) it will overwhelm us in short order. Of course every analogy has its limits. Housework is just a nagging reality. Sin on the other hand is the cause of spiritual warfare, and as the song says, "the battle belongs to the Lord."

Well, on this bright spring day I decided not to waste my time worrying about housework. Nope. I went outside and washed the car instead. Cleaning does have its satisfying moments. It felt good to drive a spotless car to get groceries. I parked it and walked toward the store. Glancing back to admire my gleaming VW, I noticed already its lower regions were spattered with mud and dust from the trip down our laneway; a trip I made in first gear. Why was I not surprised?

Happy Easter.

Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont.

Book Review

Author holds up mirror to those committed to Reformed worldview

De Eeuw van mijn Vader

Geert Mak

(Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Uitgeverij Atlas, 1999, 524 pp, fl. 49.90).

Reviewed by Harry Antonides

If you like to know more about the culture and church life in which your parents, or grandparents and great-grandparents lived in the Netherlands, this is a book for you.

Geert Mak, who grew up in a Reformed (Gereformeerde) church parsonage in Holland, tells a fascinating story about the life of his parents, beginning at the turn of the 20th century. Although he has turned his back on the faith that motivated his parents, he writes about them with candor and gentleness.

Sometimes not flattering

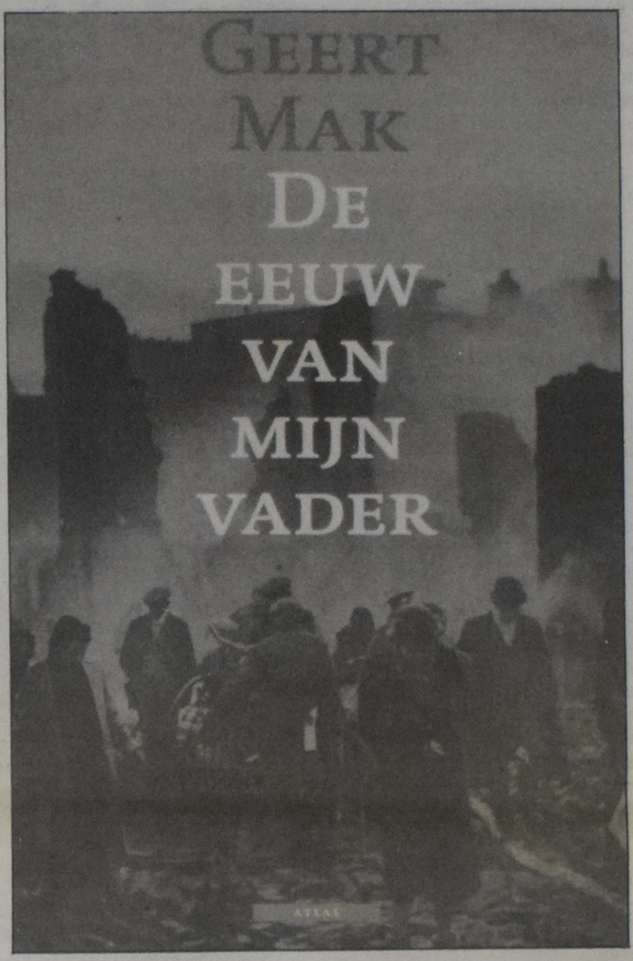
In the process, he holds up a mirror to those who are committed to the Reformed world and life view. Sometimes it is not flattering but true, and we should learn from it; sometimes it is one-sided and even unfair. The main focus of this book is the Mak family itself, that is, the lives of the author's parents and siblings. The next theme is the remaking of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. These two are presented against the political, social and cultural changes that catapulted that country into the modern era with its industrialization, revolutions, wars, Holocaust, de-colonization, material prosperity (at least in the West), and rapid secularization.

De Eeuw van mijn Vader (*The Century of my Father*) opens with a Dickensian description of Schiedam ("Black Nazareth"), the birthplace of the author's father. Catrinus Mak, born in 1899, was one of the first who broke with the family's tradition of carrying on the sail-making trade. Instead, he enrolled as a theology student at the Free University in Amsterdam. In 1924, he married Geertje van der Molen, and began his ministry in the Reformed church, starting with a combined pastorate in the churches of Brielle and Tinte, Zeeland. They had seven children of whom one died in infancy. The youngest, a "nakomertje," is the author himself, who was born in 1946.

Close-up view of life

We get a close-up view of life at the Mak and van der Molen families (the author's grandparents) who each in their own way tried to live the Christian faith. Some (within the same family) worried about bicycling on Sundays; others thought nothing of it. The role of women was carefully prescribed, and marriage invariably meant the end of whatever academic ambitions they had. But changes were in the wind. Prosperity was slowly spreading, and the impact of electrification, the automobile, railway building, and in the 1920s airplane transportation, was beginning to change the workplace and society. World War I was a rude awakening that left an ugly scar on Europe, although Holland managed to stay out of this murderous conflict that left millions dead and uprooted.

The life of Rev. Mak was filled to the brim with many responsibilities. Beside the work demanded in his own congregations, he could not help but be affected by the turmoil within the denomination. In 1924, a minister in Amsterdam, J.G. Geelkerken, preached a sermon in which he questioned whether the first chapters of Genesis must be taken literally (did the snake really speak?). This became a divisive controversy in the church and in 1926, Geelkerken was deposed. The young pastor Mak agonized over this dispute but decided to side with the church authorities. He lost som e of his close friends who considered him a traitor.



Moving to Sumatra

In 1928 Rev. Mak accepted a call to the Reformed church in Medan on Sumatra in the then Dutch East Indies, and the family, then including two children, had to adjust to a very different way of life. His ministry included visiting members in the vast Sumatra inland and traveling to various islands, which sometimes required long absences from home. It was a demanding task that also made heavy demands on his wife. In 1933, the family enjoyed a furlough in the Netherlands. Sadly, their baby Koosje died during this time, and they returned with a heavy heart to Medan.

The author is scathing in his criticism of the Dutch for their colonial policies, especially of Hendrick Colijn who played a major role in the Indies and later served as prime minister of Holland. He pays special attention to the leaders of the "*kleine luyden*," that is, those who had been much influenced by the writings and work of Groen van Prinsterer, and Abraham Kuyper ("Abraham, de Geweldige") who had served as prime minister from 1901 till 1905. He has little good to say about them and other leaders in that tradition, although he acknowledges that Kuyper advocated the need to cut the colonial ties and to prepare for the independence of the Indies.

All contact broken

When the German forces overran Holland in 1940 and the Japanese occupied the Dutch East Indies the following year, virtually all contact between the branches of the Mak family was broken. The two eldest children of the Mak family (Anna and Cas), who stayed in Holland for their studies, were stranded there for the duration of the war.

Back in the Indies, Rev. Mak who had become an army chaplain and a prisoner of war of the Japanese was given the choice to return home. Without any hesitation, he and a Roman Catholic colleague chose to remain with their fellow prisoners. Then followed months of moving from one prison camp to the next. He eventually ended up at the notorious Burma railway construction project where hundreds of thousands were forced to work under the most degrading conditions. He witnessed terrible suffering and was called upon as best he could to serve as the spiritual counselor of a ragtag collection of British, American, Australian and Dutch prisoners of war. He conducted countless funerals of men who were worked and starved to death.

In the meantime, the author's mother and three of her children were also herded into camps by their Japanese captors, where their patience and their will to live was tested as never before. But finally, the day of liberation dawned, first for the Dutch in May 1945; liberation still took another three months and two atomic bombs before the Japanese surrendered.

What a reunion!

Not until February 1946 did Rev. Mak find his way back to his family in Medan. What a reunion! But the political situation had changed forever. Dutch authority could not be restored, and it was no longer safe for the family to stay. They returned to Holland and tried to pick up the threads of their lives, now changed and seasoned by hardships and experiences they could never have imagined. But the entire family wondrously survived and was reunited.

To the surprise of his mother, at age 46 she became pregnant again, but soon this news turned to joy, because it gave her one more opportunity to nurture new life. The children viewed this birth as a symbol of the resurrected Netherlands and their family. The new baby was none other than the author himself: "This is how I came into the world in December 1946, as an unseemly (*onbehoorlijk*) healthy child of a worn-out mother, a newcomer in a family that already had lived so intensely." The following year Rev. Mak accepted a position of hospital and evangelism ministry in Leeuwarden, and another phase of the Mak family had begun

Netherlands impoverished

The post-war Netherlands was impoverished. Its economy was in tatters; much of the industrial infrastructure was destroyed or had been stolen by the Germans. Many turned their minds to emigration. But in a few years prosperity gradually and then quickly returned, now accompanied by an extensive system of social security. The traditionally disastrous financial effects of illness and unemployment were eliminated. Meanwhile the process of secularization had taken the country by storm, infecting also the erstwhile conservative Reformed churches. Church attendance dropped dramatically. All the old certainties were under attack. The youth revolted, and many do what the author himself has done: not only leave the church but abandon the Christian faith entirely.

It is in this climate, by and large well explained in this book, that Catrinus and Geertje Mak lived the last phase of their lives. They were saddened when some of their children no longer believed the faith that had sustained and given them comfort throughout their eventful lives, but they continued to embrace them in love. Rev. Mak continued to do what he felt was his livelong task, to preach the Word of God and bring the Good News to the sick and the dying. He died in 1983 after a lingering illness, and his wife passed away four years later. Both died in the assurance of the resurrection and the life everlasting.

This is how the author describes the death of his father. On that day, Sunday, July 3,1983, his father had been restless. He repeatedly tried to pull himself up by the support above his bed.

"Why do you do that?" my mother asked.

"Otherwise I will fall and die,"

he said.

"But this is what you want, to die, don't you?"

"Yes," he said.

And he let go, laid down, and so he fell, and the angels carried him.

Runaway bestseller

What are we to make of this book? Why did it become a runaway bestseller in Holland, with no fewer than 13 printings between September 1999 and December 2000? And why is it being read by so many in Canada?

I think the answer is that the author has managed to tell the story of his parents' life in the turbulent past century in a way that makes it easy for many to identify with it. He describes the generation of our parents and grandparents, and for some of us our own generation. Furthermore, he writes about the Reformed churches in the Netherlands, which are the home churches of many of us. He is writing about our roots and does that very well by interweaving the story of his parents' generation with all the major, often shocking events of the past century. And he does that with an obvious love for his parents and siblings, despite the fact that he no longer holds to his parents' Christian faith.

What lends special interest to Geert Mak's analysis is that he grew up in a minister's family and was able to reconstruct a lot of the family history on the basis of extensive records. Thanks to the diligence and the writing and collecting habits of family members, he had access to letters covering many years but also other family records and articles written by his own father.

Correct, fair analysis?

The big question is: Is his analysis of church life and, particularly that of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands, correct and fair?

There is no doubt that his criticism of the tendency towards self-righteousness, arguments about minor issues and the tendency to split churches is something that hits home. Mak's father experienced first hand the plague of small-mindedness and quarrelsomeness in his work in the church at the local and national level. There have been many instances of that in the history of the Reformed churches in Holland. What is especially disconcerting is the vehemence and even hatred that has accompanied some of those quarrels. No one who has any involvement in the work of the church can deny that all of us need to guard against and repent of the sins of selfishness and shortsightedness. This is why we need to acknowledge the truth in the criticism contained in this book.

Unbeliever's perspective

But Geert Mak's criticism is really at a more fundamental level than that. And that has to do with his perspective. He no longer believes in the truth of the Bible. His main criticism is that the Reformed people in the Netherlands who were influenced by Groen van Prinsterer, Abraham Kuyper and likeminded leaders were mistaken. He is convinced that Kuyper worked with a closed (*gesloten*) thought and life system that reduced the Christian faith to a system of rules and proscriptions that gave his followers answers for everything. This made them, so goes the charge, rigidly self-righteous and prone to endless disputations and schisms in the churches and to the pillarization (*verzuiling*) of Dutch society.

This is a severely condensed yet I believe accurate summary of the main arguments in this book against the Reformed in Holland. I do not feel adequate to a thorough repudiation of this criticism, but I write as one who is very much part of Geert Mak's parents' century. I lived in nearly three quarters of it. I was born into a family thoroughly committed to the Reformed world and life view, grounded in a deep respect for the Bible. I knew and spent time at the homes of both of my grandparents. I do not recognize in them the kinds of distasteful traits that Mak identifies with that generation. They were homes were we were loved and not browbeaten with a cold system of do's and don'ts. Did they have limitations and flaws? Yes they did. But did their faith and life correspond to Mak's description? No.

Next generation ignored

It also strikes me that Mak failed to take into account that generation of leaders who succeeded Kuyper and built on his legacy. I think of such Christian thinkers as Herman Dooyeweerd and D.H.T. Vollenhoven, as well as those who worked to apply and further refine their pioneering philosophy, such as S. U. Zuidema, Hendrik Van Riessen and a host of current leaders and teachers in the same tradition. They certainly do not uncritically follow Kuyper and the like. Neither are they blind to the previous generations's shortcomings and limitations. Nor do they define the Christian faith as a tool to keep people in line and to create all kinds of barriers between them. I have come to know some of them personally and by their writings as people with a heart like that of Mak's father, moved by the love of God to faithfully serve Him and to promote their neighbor's well-being.

A significant book

In conclusion, *De Eeuw van mijn Vader* is a significant book that is well worth your time. Geert Mak does us a favor to introduce us to his parents in whom the love of Christ the Good Shepherd is clearly reflected. The story of his family, its joys, its sorrows, and its tragedies makes this book hard to put down. He also does us a favor to point out the foibles and sins that have plagued the churches that have been the spiritual homes for many of us.

But let the reader beware. The author's decision to reject the historic Christian faith makes him a poor judge of what he perceives to be the essence of that faith understood and lived, though never perfectly, within the Reformed community.

****

P.S. I wonder whether readers of this publication — and the book itself — would be interested in attending a seminar on it, say some time in September or October. If you would favor that, please let me know. I can be reached at **hantonides@look.ca**.

Dutch churches in last-ditch effort to scupper euthanasia law

AMSTERDAM (ENI) — Churches and other religious groups are co-operating in a last-ditch attempt to stop the Netherlands becoming the first country in the world to legalize euthanasia, sometimes known as mercy killing.

Officials representing more than 50 religious and social organisations have signed a petition calling for a government bill on euthanasia to be rejected by the Senate. On March 13 the petition was presented to parliamentary officials in The Hague.

Muslims, Jews, Christians

Signatories include Muslim and Jewish religious leaders as well as Christian. To underline the wide diversity of the signatories, the petition's principal statement was accompanied by separate declarations in which various organizations explain their particular objections to euthanasia.

The bill on euthanasia was approved with a big majority last year by the Dutch parliament's Second Chamber, but has yet to be passed by the First Chamber (the Senate) before coming into force. That vote, due to take place April 10, is generally considered to be a mere formality — opinion polls have shown that a clear majority supports the proposed law.

Mercy killing has been tolerated for many years in the Netherlands, but it remains illegal. Doctors assisting in euthanasia are, at least in theory, liable to prosecution.

The new law will make it legal to end a patient's life, subject to strict criteria. The patient must be suffering continual, unbearable pain; have repeatedly asked for help to die; and a second medical opinion must be sought.

The new law will also allow patients to prepare a written request for euthanasia in advance, giving doctors the right to use their own discretion if patients become too ill to decide for themselves.

Not much change expected

The practice of euthanasia is not expected to change much when the new law comes into effect. However, the government hopes that doctors will become more open about their involvement in mercy killings.

The petition claims that the proposed legislation fails to provide sufficient safeguards for the protection of life. "This bill leads us to a society where euthanasia will increasingly come to be seen as normal medical treatment. Although of different backgrounds, we share the opinion that the lawmakers must not create any legal exemptions from punishment for [those who apply] euthanasia," it states.

Euthanasia 'cannot be a right'

One of the signatories, the Uniting Protestant Churches in the Netherlands (Samen op weg-kerken, which includes the Gereformeerde Kerken), states in its appendix to the petition: "Because God has given us life, euthanasia cannot be a right, but at most an emergency measure."

The church body expressed concern at the "creeping change in attitudes about the value of life and the esteem in which infirm people are held." The Uniting Protestant Churches is the nation's biggest Protestant body, representing 2.74 million Christians. Its secretary-general, Bas Plaisier, acknowledged that opinions on euthanasia differed within the Uniting Protestant Churches. "But I have the distinct feeling that this petition has wide support."

Church sidelined

Echoing the leader of Dutch Catholics, Cardinal Adrianus Simonis, who last week accused the government cabinet of sidelining the church, Plaisier said: "The [government] coalition does not see the churches as important players in this sort of ethical issue."

Last November, after the Second Chamber approved the bill, Plaisier commented: "A boundary has been crossed that actually should never have been crossed."

Presenting the petition on behalf of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, Bishop Antonius Hurkmans, said: "There are better solutions to safeguard the human dignity of suffering and dying, even when the suffering is unbearable and seems hopeless. ... The bill touches on the foundations of our society." The Roman Catholic Church is the biggest church in the Netherlands.

Other signatories include the Council of Mosques in the Netherlands, SKIN, which represents 35 Protestant, Pentecostal, Anglican and Orthodox denominations, the Netherlands Patients' Association, the Netherlands Doctors' Union and the Foundation of Christian Hospices in the Netherlands.

An Evangelical pro-life foundation, Schreeuw om Leven (Cry for Life), has called on its supporters to travel to The Hague on April 10 to pray during the Senate debate. The foundation has also asked clergy to raise the issue of euthanasia in church services on Sunday, 1 April and to pray that the bill will not be approved.

Cross-border broodings

Of pheasants and raccoons

Ty Hofman

My wife Cobi dug into the freezer recently and came up with a nice bag of pheasant breasts and we had a delicious Sunday dinner. When it comes to the matter of culinary delights, to me there is little that can compare with a well-prepared and well-served pheasant.

Hunting the wily pheasant

It may also be that I am so high on this treat because I am an avid hunter of the wily bird. It has been my delight since the early '50s when I lived out west and began hunting every fall with my father-in-law. We hunted everything from ducks and geese to deer and elk and moose. But the pheasant hunt was my favorite. The thrill of nearly stepping on a gloriously colored ring-neck with its great long tail and explosive chortle as it soars into the air defies description. Following a good hunt, it is a feeling I carried with me deep into the night.

Those were "the good old days," which are mostly memories for me. There are several reasons for my not hunting much any more. The past nine years has robbed me of the physical prowess necessary for a real hunter. Besides, there is little opportunity for hunting any more, for the birds have almost disappeared where once they were plentiful. There are several reason for that, like loss of habitat and some very severe winters. But the main reason is the impact of the exploding population of raccoons. They destroy the pheasant nests in early spring, kill the chicks that do manage to hatch and attack the sleeping adults at night. It is a wonder any survive. Raccoons have no natural enemies and suffer no threat from the human population either.

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"Now it might seem as though I begrudge a raccoon his daily bread. Ordinarily I would not — if the raccoon population were not out of control."

Fur is politically incorrect

This recent threat to the bird population can be placed squarely at the feet of the animal rights movement, which has intimidated our society into meek submission. Their vicious attack on trapping and the fur industry, not just with propaganda but with physical threats and violence, have eliminated raccoon coats. Few women dare to wear fur. It is "politically incorrect." Even fake fur is risky because of the symbolism involved. Fur farms cannot operate without around-the-clock guard protection from invading vandals, who never seem to be apprehended or pay the price for their violence. And the movement is growing apace. Unless we do something to stem the tide, we will have to apologize, not just for wearing fur coats and being hunters, but for eating any meat.

Animal rights religion

I think it is time that we all realize that a religious commitment is driving the animal rights people. I am no specialist on New Age theology but one obvious tenet is that all life is equally sacred, that it is human arrogance to claim that our life is superior to that of the animals, and total sacrilege to sacrifice animal life for our use, whether for food or for medical research or, especially, for hunting pleasure. In the competition for space on this planet, the animal world has the same rights we do. And since animals can't talk or organize, they are given special deference by their modern advocates. This movement is so nefarious and dangerous that, in comparison, the National Rifle Association looks good. While I've always been totally opposed to the NRA, I can see that it may play a vital role in frustrating the plans of PETA (Program for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) to enforce its way of life on others.

Why is this philosophy so wrong-headed? Simply because God created humanity in his own image, which he did not do in creating the animal world. In addition, he gave all that he created for human use, for food and clothing, etc. Just check the record in Genesis. We humans are to use but not abuse the animal world. I may bring that beautiful, multicolored cockerel to the ground with a well-aimed shot from a 16-gauge shotgun and make a delicious meal out of him. If I were going out after him only to shoot him for my pleasure, I would be sinning. But I take him home with a prayer of gratitude for a successful day in the field, and my family rejoices with me. If I hadn't shot him, he would come to some lesser end, like dying in a cold snow bank or becoming raccoon fodder.

Balance needed in nature

Now it might seem as though I begrudge a raccoon his daily bread. Ordinarily I would not — if the raccoon population were not out of control. There would be some balance in nature that would give both the raccoon and the pheasant the opportunity for life. God doesn't get any pleasure, I'm sure, seeing all those raccoons dying either from hunger or as roadkill. For all of them must die, sooner or later, and those seem to be the only two hazards to their lives. How much better and more God glorifying to become part of a warm coat for people in a cold climate. That was one of God's intentions for fur.

I sometimes think that if I were younger I would start a movement which would promote coonskin coats and the limitation of the raccoon population. I might be able to get some endorsements from well-informed Christians. I could call it the Society for the Promotion of Fur Coats and for the Preservation of Pheasant Life for Hunting to God's Glory. That would add up to the SPFCPPLHGG. But at my age and given the magnitude of the job of undoing the New Age movement, I will continue my dreaming and hope that the little seed sown here will sprout and bear much fruit.

And I will go on, saying a little prayer of gratitude every time I see a dead raccoon on the highway. That one will never threaten another little pheasant!

Tymen Hofman is an expatriate Yankee-Canuck.

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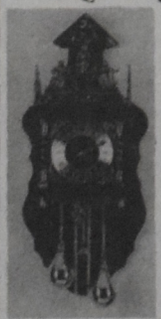

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News Comment

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

A FEW WEEKS AGO there was a conference in London at which everybody turned up: the president of the World Bank, the head of the I.M.F., the bosses of UNICEF and the UN, while Nelson Mandela said his piece on video. Churches, businesses, NGOs all had their place at the table. Their aim: to reduce world poverty by 2015. It has been tried before. Will it succeed this time? A look back and ahead might help.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS ago 30 per cent of the UK population went hungry. Being poor then was defined as "having insufficient earnings to obtain the minimum necessaries for the maintenance of mere physical efficiency." In 1898 13,000 of these died of measles and 7,500 of diphtheria, so it was no wonder that while those who were better off lived to about 60, those below the breadline died before 30. Today, if we take life span as a measure of wellbeing, being less well off financially does not nearly have the same impact as a century ago, because both rich and poor have almost the same life span.

We all know about Africa, where David Livingstone, a Scottish Missionary and Explorer, reported around 1850 that there was "perfect security for life and property all over the interior country," something that could not be said for Great Britain at that time, where the country people were crowding into cities, causing social upheaval, high mortality rates and scandalous labor practises.

NOW WE SEE THE REVERSE: while the Western world is relatively healthy in body, but not in soul, Africa and Asia are in retreat: retreat from tribal security, from self-sufficiency, and from physical health. Erosion of clan loyalty has accelerated the HIV curse, something far worse than measles and diphtheria in the old world a century ago.

In 2001 everbody in the Western World can have enough to "maintain physical efficiency." Nobody need go hungry. Yet, statistically there are a lot of poor around, especially in the area where I live, greater Quinte, where the percentage of households with low income is about four per cent higher than the provincial average of 17.69 per cent. The same 'poverty' report says that a quarter of the schoolchildren come to school without having eaten breakfast as a result of "food insecurity."

Please, forgive me. I know that children come to school without breakfast, but that cannot be blamed on "food insecurity," implying insufficient funds. Food and nourishment can sometimes be mutually exclusive. Many now are 'overfed' and 'undernourished.' Factory fare — soft drinks, donuts, hotdogs — do not a nutritious diet make, which requires a measure of skill and a will to invest some effort. It is possible that low income people have less schooling, are less discerning and more prone to believe fast food advertising and so waste precious dollars on non-foods.

Premier Harris wants Ontario to be better educated, and I agree. Adult education is needed, too, and should start with the basic essentials, which is food. I don't think that human rights are violated when the acceptance of public money is made conditional upon attending courses in nutrition, where the hazards of consuming soft drinks — the largest selling item in the food category — are exposed and where people are made aware of the empty calories in many snack packs, while gaining practical knowledge of how to prepare meals from scratch. It was said a century ago: "If you want to be happy for a week, take a wife; if you want to be happy for a month, kill a pig; if you want to be happy all your life, plant a garden." Today this still means having your own garden but for most it means using food from local sources, fostering pride in personal accomplishment in the process.

LOOKING AHEAD, I THINK we are on the eve of a recession. This makes it even more urgent to find ways to live better on less. Also, we simply must cut health care costs; here prevention is the surest cure, while the best doctor is Dr. Diet. Prevention promotes well-being, and a proper diet costs less. Example: each fall I scout the back roads and raid the numerous unattended wild apple trees to make pure apple sauce; each evening I put one cup of rolled oats and four cups of water in a small slow cooker ($10) and in the morning porridge is ready, one of the most healthy foods, which, with a bit of brown sugar, sliced apple, raisins or dried plums, gives a perfect start of the day. Total cost: 30 cents for 3 people. There is no excuse for food insecurity, not with basic knowledge of food preparation and education in the value of the food dollar.

WE ARE IN FOR tougher times according to the stock market, which is as jittery as a kite on a stormy day, zigzagging irrationally, mostly down and prone to crash. Economists are excellent forecasters in boom times, but when it comes to recessions, the people with doctorates in economics have usually been wrong. A decade ago Japan was the shining example of the world, and corporate management made pilgrimages to the Land of the Rising Sun to imitate their ways. Japan itself, in a fit of hubris, condemned the West as degenerate.

Now, it seems, the Sun is setting rapidly, because its paternalistic government decided not to follow Western practises of high interest rates — leading to socially unacceptable bankrupties — and unemployment (Japan offered life-time employment). The inept politicians unsuccessfully spent billions to revive its economy. Now it has run out of options and poses an acute danger to the economy of the entire world. Japan has a history of sudden social changes, from agrarian to industrial, from military to peace-loving. Watch for a world-quaking event there, because beneath its apparently imperturbable surface, an abrupt shift may turn everything upside down.

SO NO WONDER THE stock market is hyper nervous and has seen a large drop, signalling a looming recession. What sort of recession will it be? Since WWII we have had "L", "V", "W", and "U" shaped ones. An "L" shaped downturn took place in 1961-65, when the economy stayed down for a long time and only slowly recovered. In a "V" recession the economy goes down and quickly up again, as was the case in 1990-91; the "U" variety indicates a more prolonged bottom before recovering, as we saw in 1973-75, while the "W" notes a down, an up, a down again and an upturn, such as was the case in 1980-82.

We now have had the longest period of continuous growth in the economy since the war, lasting twice as long as the average expansion since 1945. Larry Summers, who just retired as America's Treasury secretary, has recently argued that the current economic cycle is fundamentally different from any of the previous 'alphabet' recessions, more like what happened before WWII and similar to the current malaise in Japan, where the economy is in deflation, a nasty reminder of our Dirty Thirties. Interest rates there as low as 0.00 per cent have not pulled the economy up from its sickness.

Our current economy had been hailed as perfect: good growth and no inflation. The trouble with low inflation is that it has given people and banks a false sense of security. With expectations of everlasting prosperity, lenders relaxed their loaning standards, and consumers and investors lost their reluctance about debt. Fueled by credit and optimism about future profits, investment increased and stock prices soared.

THIS BRINGS ME TO THE last letter of the alphabet. It could quite well be that we will have a "Z" recession — my designation — where the economy goes down against all expectations and stays down for a long time. I base this gloomy forecast on the following: the sustained boom in the U.S. has coincided with a deep drop in household savings, something that has never happened before. Total household debt — credit cards, car loans, mortgages — topped 100 per cent of disposable annual income last year for the first time ever. In 1980, the ratio was two thirds. The average homeowner now has mortgaged nearly half the value of his home compared to only 30 per cent two decades ago.

So debt has never been higher, while private-sector net savings has moved from a surplus of five per cent of Gross Domestic Product 10 years ago to a deficit of six per cent last year. The same happened in Japan, Britain and Sweden in the late 1980's, and when assets, such as stocks and property values, dropped, households tried to restore their deficits by saving.

HERE COMES THE RUB. Our economy depends on people spending. In Japan, savings fell from plus five per cent in 1986 to minus two per cent in 1990. When the slowdown came, people started to pinch their yen, and now the average Japanese has $70,000 in the old sock; they don't trust the banks, which pay no interest anyway, and they're afraid to spend, being unsure about employment.

WE TOO DEPEND ON letting go of the dough. If we don't, we get a depression, and if we do, we get environmental breakdown. That's the bind we are in. Amidst this uncertainty, the stock market slides: total loss this past year, $4 trillion, or $14,000 for every American or $30,000 apiece for the 45 per cent who have shares. Combine this with the large U.S. trade deficit, last year amounting to $430 billion, and we have a recipe for disaster. Europeans and Japanese have financed this debt, and if they lose their appetite for American assets, we may see a run on the dollar. A falling dollar means more inflation and an even greater increase in the trade deficit. So the odds look bad and worse for the poor, who will be with us well beyond 2015.

Bert Hielema is tapping maple trees on his Tweed property for the first time. Fun.

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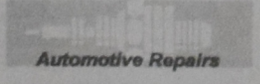

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Just west of Mohawk on Hwy. #2
We supply propane
Rob Brouwer
Doug Kloet
Shell
(905) 648-4113 **Adrian Kloet (owner)**

Your gift of $10 or more to Reformed Faith Witness is tax receiptable and will be greatly appreciated by the staff of *Christian Courier* and the board of Reformed Faith Witness. Please make your cheque payable to Reformed Faith Witness.

Classifieds

Classified Rates

As of May 1999:
Note: 7% GST will be added to all prices listed below.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION
Christian Courier is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, nine business days prior to publication.

RATES
All personal and family announcements: $16.00 per column inch (pci) + GST (columns are two inches wide).
Display advertising re: businesses and organizations: minimum $18.20 pci + GST, depending on design and frequency.

PHOTOS
There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable Internet image.

PERSONAL ADS
Christian Courier would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $16 pci per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS
We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *Christian Courier* and to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.

SUBMITTING YOUR AD
mail: *Christian Courier*
#4 - 261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
fax: 905-682-8313
email: ccadpromo@aol.com

OTHER INFORMATION
a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. And editing style.
b) Please provide us with clear copy. *Christian Courier* is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.

Birth

Herman & Ida Van Hattem of Nova Scotia are pleased to announce the birth of their 11th grandchild
Michell Thijs Twijnstra
born on December 17, 2000. First child to the proud parents Arnold & Teresa Twijnstra, RR 1, Miscouche, PEI
C0B 1T0

Birthday

The family of
WOBBE BYLSMA
congratulates him on his 80th birthday D.V. April 1, 2001.
His wife Pietje and his children Theresa & Jim, Auke & Chris, Wibbina & Gerald, John & Ruby, Anne & Terry, Cory & John, Pat & Dave, along with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, thank God for the blessing he is to us.
Address: RR 1, Blyth ON N0M 1H0

Anniversaries

1951 April 8 2001
With gratefulness we are looking forward to celebrating the 50th anniversary of our parents and grandparents
DERK and RENSKE BOSCH
May the Lord continue to keep them in His care.
"...yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock." (Matt.7:25b)
Best wishes from:
John & Corinne Bosch — Beamsville, Ont.
Erin, Crystal, Laura
Pete & Sylvia Meindersma — Binbrook, Ont.
Renee, Monique, Paula
Richard Bosch and Judy Holtvluwer — Hamilton, Ont.
Robert & Joanne Bosch — Fruitland, Ont.
Dereck, Corey
Address: 57 Elm Tree Rd. W, Grimsby, ON L3M 4E7

It is with joy and thanksgiving that we would like to announce the 50th anniversary of our parents
KLAAS and SUZANNE DYKSTRA
Children:
Ralph (†)
Martin (†) & Ann Dykstra
Kurtis, Karie-Ann, Kristen
John & Mary Dykstra
Tracy & Chris Meersch, Matthew, Trevor, Sabrina
Willard Dykstra, Margaret Dykstra
Nathaniel, Theodore, David, Deanna
Shirley & Fred Heuser
Devin, Brandon, Keera
Betty & Leo VanderWekken
Danielle, Joseph, Davida, Jaden, Dara, Jesse
Karen & Wayne Haagsma
Karissa, Jenna, Rachel
Great-grandchildren Andrew and Zachary Meersch
Psalm 134:3: "May the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion."
Address: 130 4th Ave. SW, Owen Sound, ON N4K 5T7

1951 April 13 2001
Haulerwijk, Fr. Aylmer, Ont.
"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you." (Psalm 32:8)
With joy and thanksgiving to our Lord, we wish to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents
WYTZE and JANNY HIEMSTRA
who were married April 13, 1951, in Haulerwijk, Friesland.
We, your children and grandchildren, pray for our Heavenly Father's continued blessings in your lives.
We invite family and friends to join us for an Open House on Saturday, April 14, 2001, from 2 - 4:30 p.m. at the Aylmer Christian Reformed Church, 194 South St. W, Aylmer, Ont.
Best wishes only, please.
Home address: 103 Fourth Ave., Aylmer, ON N5H 2L2

Tzummarum London
the Netherlands Ontario
1951 April 12 2001
"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy."
(Psalm 126:3)
With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord we will celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents
ARTHUR and GRACE STELPSTRA
(nee SIJBESMA)
We thank God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon you. May He continue to bless you with good health and keep you in His loving care.
Love and best wishes from your family:
Ann & Jack Groeneveld — Allenford, Ont.
Brian, Lee-Ann & Jordan, Andrew, Joseph, Peter, David
Joan & Rafael Shoheb — Rotterdam, the Neth.
Jack & Alice Stelpstra — London, Ont.
Michael, Jennifer, Matthew
Irene & Jake de Boer — London, Ont.
Gregory, Richard, Steven
We invite family and friends to join us at an Open House on Saturday, April 14, 2001, D.V., from 2 - 4 p.m. at Bethel Christian Reformed Church, 716 Classic Dr., London.
Best wishes only, please.
Home address: 1183 Kaladar Dr., London, ON N5V 2R6

Port Arthur, Ont. Guelph, Ont.
1961 April 7 2001
With thanksgiving to God we announce the 40th anniversary of our parents and grandparents
BEN and WILLY VAN OMMEN
(nee STEIN)
We pray that God will bless you.
With love from:
Albert
Arthur
Raymond & Teresa
David, Virginia
Harold
Home address: 63 Cedar Street, Guelph, ON N1G 1C4

Lemmer Bowmanville
the Netherlands Canada
1951 April 11 2001
It is with joy and thanksgiving to our Lord for His goodness, we announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents
ALBERT and TRIX VANDER GAAST
Our prayer is that God will give them many more years together.
With love from your children and grandchildren:
Gary & Marsha
Rianna & Erica
Jean & Henry Centen
Joanna, Mike, Carley & Andrew
George & MaryAnn
Sarah
Linda
Albert
An Open House will be held D.V. on April 14, 2001, from 2 - 4 p.m. at the Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church, Bowmanville, Ont.
Home address: 2122 Maple Grove Rd., Bowmanville ON L1C 3K7

1951 April 6 2001
With lots of excitement and joy we want you to know that:
JIM and SINA MEYERS
are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.
We love you very much Mom and Dad, Opa and Oma. We thank God for you and for His faithfulness to all of us.
Elly & Bram Hoff
Shannon, Aron, Marcel, Benjamin, Kristin, Julie, Peter
Fred & Sandy Meyers
Jim, Blake, Jordan
Helen & John Ysselstein
Sjerp, John, Marc, Daniel, David
Sharon & Jeff Buisman
Janine, Katelyn, Sarah, Heather
Friends are invited to an Open House on Saturday, May 26 from 2 - 5 p.m. 1444 Irvine Rd., Niagara on the Lake, Ont. L0S 1J0

Obituary

FERNHOUT
Our Heavenly Father called home our dear mother and grandmother
MARGARET
at the Chatham Hospital, on Monday, January 29, 2001.
Born in Waddinxveen, the Netherlands, 91 years ago, daughter of the late John Jacob VanDerham and Grietje Ouborj. Margaret came to Canada in 1951 and settled in Chatham in 1974. Her first husband, Clarence Karreman, predeceased in 1968 and her second husband, Clarence Fernhout, predeceased in 1977.
Surviving are one son John J. Karreman and wife Mary of Orillia; two daughters Grace Counsell-Smids of Chatham, Clara and husband Tymen Hopman of Wallaceburg; a daughter-in-law Valerie Karreman of Inglewood; three step-sons John Fernhout and wife Betty of St. Albert, Alberta, Jake Fernhout and wife Marion of Edmonton, Harry Fernhout and wife Hilda of Brampton; two step-daughters Chris and husband Theo Los of Edmonton and Irene and husband Jack Heerema Sr. of Thunder Bay; 41 grandchildren and 69 great-grandchildren; one brother Koos VanDerham and wife Corrie of the Netherlands. Predeceased by a son Harry Karreman, nine brothers, two sisters, two sons-in-law John Smids and Don Counsell.
Funeral service for Margaret was held at First Christian Reformed Church, Chatham on January 31. Rev. Paul Stadt officiated. Interment in Maple Leaf Cemetery, Chatham.
Granddaughters Margaret Vander-Ende delivered the eulogy and Hilda Cook read the poem "Safely Home". Great-granddaughter Cheryl Smids sang, "Be Unto Your Name."
The Lord is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life — of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)
Correspondence address:
Grace Counsell, 14 Hillcrest, Chatham, ON N7M 4E7

Obituaries

Amsterdam Ancaster
the Neth. Ont.
On February 26, 2001, the Lord took home our much loved mother and Oma
TRUDY KUURSTRA (nee MENNES)
at the age of 82.
"The loving kindness of my God is more than life to me. So I will praise you all my days and pray continually. In you my soul is satisfied, my darkness turns to light and joyful meditations fill the watches of the night." (Psalm 63:2)
She is held in loving memory by her children:
John & Heather Kuurstra — Mississauga, Ont.
Philip, Alan, Michael
Bill & Shirley Kuurstra — Ottawa, Ont.
Elise, Emily
The funeral service was held at Ancaster CRC, on March 1, 2001, with Pastor John Bouwers officiating.
Correspondence Address:
B. Kuurstra, 1999 LeGrand Cres., Orleans, ON K1E 3T3

Nijverdal Orillia
the Neth. Ont.
August 7,1929-March 12, 2001
The Lord called home His faithful servant
HENDRIKA (HENNY) VAN DYK
(nee POELAKKER)
Predeceased by her husband Gerrit Willem (Bill) Van Dyk (Jan. 2000).
Dear mother and Oma of:
George & Margaret — Orillia, Ont.
Melissa, Kristin, Gregory
Brenda & David Regts — Peachtree City, Georgia
Dear sister of:
Jan & Dientje Poelakker and family, the Neth.
Henk (predeceased) & Janny Koeman and family, the Neth.
Gerrit (predeceased) & Bertie Poelakker and family, the Neth.
Riny & Annemarie Poelakker and family, the Neth.
The funeral service was held at the First Christian Reformed Church of Orillia, Ont. on Thursday, March 15, 2001. Pastor Rick Nanninga officiated.
Correspondence address:
George Van Dyk, 1870 Division Rd.W, RR 2, Orillia ON L3V 6H2

Wanted

Wanted in reasonably good condition copy of out-of-print **children's story Bible, O. T. and/or N. T., by Anne de Vries**, preferably a Paidea edition with illustrations by Cornelis Jetses. Will pay. Phone Dan or Michelle at: **780-471-5742** or e-mail: d_tavenier@telusplanet.net

For Sale

Church selling entire stock of pews 512 linear ft., 20 - 30 yrs old, solid white oak, honey finish. Excellent condition, immediately available, priced to sell. Ask for Gabriel at **905-632-9637** Burlington Ont.

Send your anniversary, birthday and other important family notices to: *Christian Courier* at fax #: 905-682-8313 or by e-mail to: ccadpromo@aol.com

PICTURE THIS!
You can advertise in our Business and Service Directory once a month for only: $25.00 + GST

AIDS drugs and Africa: profits vs. people

PRETORIA, South Africa, (Zenit.org) — Should pharmaceutical companies cede their patents to help AIDS victims in Africa? Should the firms sell the drugs below cost?

Debate over these questions has intensified recently as activists, countries and drug firms grapple with the problem of how to make AIDS treatments accessible to people who normally could never afford them.

Pharmaceutical giant Bristol-Myers Squibb announced that it would no longer try to stop other companies in Africa from making generic versions of one of its drugs used to treat human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the *New York Times* reported. Bristol-Myers holds the patent on stavudine, sold as Zerit, and said it would not use its legal rights to keep lower-cost generic versions of this drug out of South Africa or any other African nation.

Slashing the price of drugs

Bristol-Myers also said it would slash the price of Zerit and another AIDS drug in Africa to a combined price of $1 a day. In the United States, one day's dose of the two drugs costs $18.

The decision was praised by many activists who have been urging the drug companies to allow generic drug makers to make cheap versions of life-saving medicines. "This is groundbreaking," said Kate Kraus, a member of ACT UP Philadelphia, a group that has led protests around the world against the big drug makers.

Bristol-Myers' announcement came shortly after U.S.-based Merck & Co. decided it would offer Crixivan and Stocrin, its two anti-retroviral medicines, for $600 and $500, respectively, per patient per year in the developing world. "At these prices, it said, it would make no profit," the *Financial Times* reported.

The decision to reduce prices came just after a trial commenced in South Africa, brought by 39 pharmaceutical companies who are challenging a 1997 law giving the government power to produce or import cheaper versions of drugs still protected by patent. South African authorities say that with up to four million HIV-positive people in their country, the drug industry has not reacted sufficiently to help meet the high cost of treatment for infected patients. The companies, for their part, accuse South Africa of letting the AIDS problem get out of control.

Human rights groups say the case goes beyond legal matters, noted the *Washington Post.* The deeper question, they say, is to what extent the property rights of prosperous Western corporations should prevail over the developing world's need to help its people. It's estimated that of the 36 million people living with HIV, more than 25 million are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Other drugs too expensive

The pharmaceutical debate is not limited to AIDS treatments. The *Guardian* in England reported Feb. 12, 2001 that sufferers of diarrhea, meningitis, malaria and tuberculosis also go untreated because the drugs they need are too expensive for them.

The cost of treatment for HIV is particularly high. AZT and 3TC, the basic anti-retroviral drugs, carry an annual price tag of $10,000 to $15,000 per patient. By contrast, most workers in South Africa earn less than $3,000 a year — and they are considered rich by the continent's standards.

Brazil, India and Thailand have started producing cheaper versions of anti-HIV drugs. Cipla, an Indian firm, asked the South African government for permission to sell inexpensive generic versions of eight of the 15 commonly used anti-HIV drugs. Cipla has said it could offer an AIDS regimen for $600 per patient per year.

Recouping research costs

In their defense, the pharmaceutical companies argue that they need patent protection to recoup the vast sum it costs to research and develop drugs. They say it takes $1 billion to get a new medicine to market.

The *Financial Times* observed that the decision by Merck to lower prices "could set an extremely dangerous precedent for the drugs industry" and lead to an "all-out price war." The same could occur for other patented drugs. The newspaper quoted Trevor Jones, director-general of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, who said, "While the industry is more than willing to do what it can, it cannot act as a sort of National Health Service to the world."

The sanctity of patents

The *Financial Times* warned that if the industry cannot overcome the impression that it is willing to place the sanctity of patents above the sanctity of life, support for intellectual property on medicines could erode. "That would undermine the entire foundation on which drug research is built," the newspaper said.

The same paper, however, pointed out Feb. 17 that the patent system, which enables companies to recoup research costs and make profits, has a disadvantage: The price of patented medicines bears no relation to the cost of manufacturing them. When a medicine finally goes off patent, generic manufacturers can charge a tenth of the price and still make a profit.

Furthermore, the *Financial Times* argued, the industry's claim that it needs "super-profits" to undertake risky research investments is undermined by the huge amounts it lavishes on marketing. GlaxoSmithKline, the newly merged Anglo-American company, boasts that it spends $500,000 an hour on research and development. But it invests nearly twice as much in sales and marketing.

Tiny national health budgets

Even at much lower prices, relatively few Africans can afford anti-AIDS drugs without outside assistance; the poorest nations have annual health budgets equivalent to $10 per person. So the next step could be action by the Group of Seven major industrial powers, the *Wall Street Journal* reported. Pressure apparently is building to announce an anti-AIDS plan at the G-7 summit in Genoa, Italy, this June.

Italy, which is hosting the summit, has proposed creating a trust fund of at least $1 billion — part from governments, part from private companies — that would be managed by the World Bank and would fight AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, dysentery and other diseases.

A way has to be found whereby drug companies receive sufficient protection in order to have a financial incentive to keep producing new products. At the same time it is clearly unjust to charge Third World countries the same prices for treatment that people in the richest nations pay.

GREENPEACE
GREEN TIPS

(NC)—When cutting your lawn, keep your mower blades high. The best height for grass is two and a half inches, anything shorter is hard to maintain, encourages weeds and disease and requires more intervention. Longer grass also protects the roots, offering more shade and preventing water evaporation.

For a free copy of "Stepping Lightly on the Earth, Recipes for Responsibility" to learn more environmentally—friendly tips for your home and garden, please write: Greenpeace Information Office, 250 Dundas Street West, Suite 605B, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2Z5.

- News Canada

Obituaries

"Be faithful even to the point of death and I will give you the crown of life." (Rev 2:10b)

On March 1, 2001
JOHANNA ELIZABETH (AN) DE RIJK (SCHEFFER)
passed from life to life. She was 91 years old.
Beloved mother of:
John & Susan Derijk — Okotoks, Alta.
Ena & Lippe de Haan — Exeter, Ont.
Tom deRyk — Collingwood, Ont.
Dick & Faye DeRyk — Yorkton, Sask.
Much loved Oma of 10 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.
Predeceased by her husband Dick (1979) and sisters Ida, Jo, Dina, Rina, Rie, brothers Rinus and Jan (the Netherlands). Survived by sisters Nel (the Netherlands), Wil (Calgary) and brother Jaap (Edmonton).
Funeral service took place on March 3, 2001, in the Exeter CRC. Interment Pinecrest Cemetery, Ottawa, Ont.

Schoonebeek Renfrew
the Neth. Ont.
July 23, 1933 - March 9, 2001
The Lord has taken to Himself
JOHN A. W. EISEN
Having run the race with perseverance he has received the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.
In spite of having Multiple Sclerosis for over 40 years he lived joyfully and used every opportunity to witness for his Lord. He shared over 42 happy years with his wife, Trudy. He was an inspiration to all whom he met and sent letters to. Dad will be missed by all who knew and loved him.
Trudy Eisen (Tjitske Alkema)
John & Jacqui Eisen (Eygenraam)
Kate, Nathan, Simeon, Tessa & Caleb
Brother of:
Jennie VandenAkker (Henk) the Neth.
Johann Eisen (Pietje) the Neth.
Gerda Engelage (George)
Thunder Bay, Ont.
Correspondence address:
246 Bruce St. Renfrew ON K7V 3V9

Job Opportunity

Cook/maid/nanny/cashier. Looking for versatile +19 person to help in a small business in rural N.S. Room provided. Approx. June to Oct. **Phone: 902-657-2255. E-mail: jac@ns.sympatico.ca**

Miscellaneous

Rimbey Christian School (located in Rimbey, AB) is holding a fundraiser to build a gymnasium. If you or your church, or your school, would like to make a donation, please send cheques to:
Rimbey Christian School
Gym Fund
Box 90
Rimbey, AB T0C 2J0
Ph: 403-843-3904
Your prayers and support are greatly appreciated.

Job Opportunity

Mountainview Christian Reformed Church of Grimsby, Ont. is seeking a **Discipleship Ministry Coordinator.** This will be an annual, two days per week, contact position to equip, encourage and develop a small group discipling ministry. A job description is available by contacting the church secretary, Fran Dekker, by phone at **905-945-0004** or by e-mail: **grimsbycrc@aol.com** Applications will be accepted until April 13, 2001. Please send to:
Mountainview CRC,
290 Main St. E, Grimsby, ON
L3M 1P8
Att.: Mrs. Sue Kikkert.

Personal

Senior/widow in Hamilton interested in meeting female in similar condition with **an interest in occasional vacation excursions.** Please reply in writing indicating your travel interests to **File # 2716, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.** Replies will be treated with confidence.

Gentleman, age 57, active Christian, would like to meet lady, musically inclined, between 40-50. (Please send picture.) Confidentiality guaranteed. Send letter to **File #2709**, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines ON L2W 1A1.

Church Anniversary

50th ANNIVERSARY
Taber Christian Reformed Church, 50th anniversary celebration, Taber, Alberta.
All former members and friends of the congregation are invited to a weekend of celebration on **May 19 and 20, 2001.** Join us for a church picnic and program on Saturday and commemorative services on Sunday. Please RSVP if you plan to attend. For more information and/or to make reservations, call Lena at **403-223-8402** or e-mail Marilyn: **dvisser@telusplanet.net**

Job Opportunity

Vernon Christian Reformed Church has an opening for a **part-time youth pastor.** We are looking for a person who can organize youth activities that develop faith in youth and build our church community. Depending on education and experience, this position may lead to full-time employment. Send resumes to:
Vernon Christian Reformed Church, 3605-12th Street, Vernon, BC V1T 3S7

Miscellaneous

Nutrition Information
Per 150 g serving
(one medium potato with skin)

Energy	**109 Cal**
Protein	**3.7 g**
Fat	**0.2 g**
Carbohydrate	**23 g**
Dietary Fibre	**2.7 g**
Sodium	**5 mg**
Potassium	**729 mg**

Classifieds

Teachers

ORILLIA, ONT.:
Orillia Christian School invites applications for the following positions:
- a full-time primary teacher for the 2001/2002 school year. This is a maternity leave position.
- a part-time intermediate teacher (60%) for the 2001/2002 school year.
- a part-time resource teacher (40%) to complete a maternity leave position.

Please submit a resume, references and a statement of faith to:
Mr. George Hoytema, Principal
111 Simcoe St., Box 862,
Orillia, ON L3V 1G6
Phone/fax: 705-326-0532

ST. CATHARINES, ONT.:
Beacon Christian High School in St. Catharines, Ont. invites applications for a possible opening for a **Computer Program Co-ordinator and Computer and Math teacher.** The full-time position would commence in August 2001. Qualified teachers who love God, high school students, and learning and teaching Computers and Mathematics are asked to send a letter of application and a resume to:
Mr. Ted Harris, Principal
Beacon Christian High School
2 O'Malley Dr.,
St. Catharines, ON L2N 6N7
Phone: 905-937-7411;
fax: 905-937-1130;
e-mail: harristed@yahoo.com

SMITHVILLE, ONT.:
Smithville District Christian High is inviting applications for a **full time English** position commencing in September 2001.
We also have **possible positions** in Science, Music, French, and Social Sciences.
Please address all inquiries to:
M. Stroobosscher, Principal
Smithville District Christian High School
6488 Smithville Rd.,
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
Phone: 905-957-3255;
fax: 905-907-3431
e-mail: sdchoffice@sdch.on.ca

TRENTON, ONT.:
Trenton Christian School invites applications from qualified teachers for a maternity leave position- for **Senior Kindergarten**. It is 60% for one school year, effective September 1, 2001. There may potentially be other positions available as well. Music is an asset. Please send letter of application, resumes, inquiries, etc. to:
Ike Witteveen, Principal
Trenton Christian School
340 Second Dug Hill Rd., RR 4,
Trenton, ON K8V 5P7
Phone: 613-392-3600;
Fax:613-392-6316;
e-mail: tcs@reach.net

Job Opportunity

CALVIN COLLEGE

DEAN OF THE CHAPEL

Calvin College seeks applicants for the position of Dean of the Chapel. The Calvin community is committed to carrying out its educational activities and life practices in obedience to God's word. The Dean of the Chapel provides spiritual leadership, prophetic challenge and priestly support for the fulfillment of this commitment.

Calvin College is a Christian liberal arts college in the Reformed tradition. The Dean of the Chapel will embrace the Reformed tradition of the Christian faith, energetically support the liberal arts mission of the college and articulate a coherent vision for Christian faculty and student development. The successful candidate will have: a Master of Divinity degree and /or a doctoral degree; a minimum of ten years related experience and/or training; strong communication, interpersonal, organizational, and leadership skills; demonstrated competence in worship leadership and preaching, exemplary oral rhetoric and writing skills.

Candidates should submit a resume, including the name and telephone number of three references to: **Connie Bellows, Director of Human Resources, Calvin College, 3201 Burton SE, Grand Rapids MI 49546.**

Calvin College is an equal employment opportunity employer.

Event

INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES

announces the creation of
The H. Evan Runner Chair in the History of Philosophy
In honour of Dr.H.Evan Runner, Th.B., Th.M., D. Phil.

As first holder of the Runner Chair,
Dr. Robert Sweetman, History of Philosophy,
will give an address:
"Of Runners and Batons: Viewing the Marathon of Philosophy from the Cool of the Giant's Shade"

Saturday, April 21, 2001 at 3:00p.m.
Calvin College Chapel
3201 Burton SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 USA
Reception following

Institute for Christian Studies
229 College Street, Suite 200
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R4
www.icscanada.edu
416-979-2331
Toll-Free: 888-326-5347

Event

BIBLE AND MINISTRY CONFERENCE
The Former Prophets: Joshua-Kings
Calvin Theological Seminary
June 7, 7:00 p.m. to June 9 12:00 noon, 2001

Speakers:
Ellen F. Davis and Margaret Adams Parker (Protestant Episcopal Seminary of Virginia)
"Translating Ruth: Giving the Story New Linguistic and Visual Form"
Duane K. Kelderman (Neland Ave. Christian Reformed; Calvin Theological Seminary)
"How Preaching the Former Prophets Can Be Your Best Preaching"
Arie C. Leder (Calvin Theological Seminary)
"Paradise Lost: Waiting by the Rivers of Babylon"
Margaret Adams Parker
"Visual Images of the Biblical David"
John H. Stek (Calvin Theological Seminary)
"Rahab of Canaan and Israel: Joshua 2"
John L. Thompson (Fuller Theological Seminary)
"Preaching Texts of Terror in the Book of Judges, with help from the history of interpretation"
Stanley D. Walters (Rosedale Presbyterian, Toronto)
"Reading Samuel to Hear God"
John D. Witvliet (Calvin Institute for Christian Worship)
"The Function of the Liturgical Assembly on Israel's Journey: Insights from the Former Prophets"

Meditations by:
William T.Koopmans (Cephas Christian Reformed, Peterborough, Ont.)
Stanley D.Walters (Rosedale Presbyterian, Toronto, Ont.)

Seminars by:
Andrew E.Beunk (Fruitland Christian Reformed, Fruitland Ont; Calvin Theological Seminary)
Sidney Greidanus (Calvin Theological Seminary)
Stanley Mast (La Grave Ave Christian Reformed, Grand Rapids, MI)
Eep Talstra (Free University, Amsterdam)
John L. Thompson (Fuller Theological Seminary)

For further information:
www.calvin.edu/seminary
or contact Paul Verhoef at: pverho72@calvin.edu

Job Opportunity

DORDT COLLEGE

DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE EDUCATION
Faculty Position Beginning August 2001

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Supervise and administer a graduate education program; teach in the undergraduate and graduate education program.

Qualifications - Ph.D. or Ed.D with teaching and administrative experience. Distance education experience desirable. Applications accepted until position is filled. Qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a curriculum vitae/resume and a letter of interest to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Avenue NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712 722-4496
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

Now advertise your business every month. BUSINESS DIRECTORY ads are 2.5"x1.75". Cost is only $25.00 plus GST ($26.75).

To advertise in *Christian Courier*, call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-4838.

Classifieds

Miscellaneous

Student Loans

Helping Canadian Christian students, in financial need, who attend Christian Colleges & High Schools.

- Interest free until graduation
- Donors to CEAF receive full tax receipt
- Large portion of loan is forgivable upon graduation
- Student(s) must be enrolled in an approved Christian College or High School
- Small administration fee

For a complete information package contact,
Mrs. Mynie Zondag

CEAF CHRISTIAN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION
FIDDLERS GREEN POSTAL OUTLET
P.O. BOX 81120
ANCASTER, ONTARIO
L9G 4X2
TEL.: (905) 648-9899
FAX: (905) 648-2110

Springtime tips for trouble-free driving

- Check engine oil whenever you gas up. Leaks can occur and low oil pressure can cause serious damage.
- Have your air filter checked regularly and your oil and oil filter changed at regular intervals. Dirty filters impair performance and pollute the environment. Every three months or 5,000 kilometers is highly recommended.
- The correct tire pressure extends tire life. Keep tires inflated to the vehicle manufacturer's suggested pressure — you'll usually find it on a sticker inside the driver's door jamb.
- Make sure your spare is inflated and your jack is handy. Check out quick-fix devices like: Tire Jack, to temporarily mend and inflate your tire; and Jump It, to re-start your car without booster cables.
- Top up windshield washer fluid regularly. You'll need it in summer as well as in winter.

- A smeared windshield cuts visibility dramatically. Clean off windshield wiper blades and change them at the first sign of wear. Consider a conditioner like Prestone Wiper Blade Restorer to keep them supple, effective, and to prolong their life.

Additional car care and safety tips are available online at www.prestone.com.

- News Canada

Teachers

Langley Christian Schools
LCS, an inter-denominational Christian school system of about 700 students (K-12) is inviting applications for September 2001:

- Special Education
- Primary Teacher
- Computer Teacher (7-12)
- Science -Chemistry (9-12)
- Librarian (7-12)
- Math Teacher (9-11)
- Director of Development and Marketing
- French Teacher (7-9)

Forward inquiries to:
Leo Smit, Superintendent
22702 - 48th Avenue
Langley, BC V2Z 2T6
Phone: 604-533-0839
Fax: 604-533-0842
E-Mail: lmsmit@home.com

NANAIMO, B.C.:
Nanaimo Christian School, a group 1 independent school will be hiring a **secondary Math/Science** teacher. We are currently a K-11 school with plans to expand to K-12 next year. We are seeking a dynamic, B.C. certifiable teacher for our first graduating grade 12 class.
Interested candidates should submit their resume, including transcripts, Christian Education philosophy and extra-curricular interests to:
Mr. John Reems, Principal,
Nanaimo Christian School
198 Holland Rd., Nanaimo, BC
V9R 6W2
Phone: 250-754-4512;
fax; 250-754-4271

WOODSTOCK, ONT.:
John Knox Christian School in Woodstock, Ontario, invites applications for **possible openings** at the primary and intermediate levels. Our most immediate needs are **Music (Band) and French.**
Applicants wishing to join a dynamic team of committed Christian teachers are urged to send their resume to:
William Barneveld, Principal
John Knox Christian School
PO Box 243, Woodstock, ON
N4S 7W8

Travel

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MARTINAIR... DIRECT

Pastor Wanted

Christ Community Church of Victoria on Vancouver Island in southwestern B.C. is seeking a **full-time Pastor — solo position.** CCC is one of two CRC churches in Victoria, with 135 professing members, many young families and an average worship attendance of 200. We emphasize friendship evangelism and contemporary worship with dynamic preaching. We have numerous youth and adult programs and an active ministry to the physically and mentally challenged. To correspond with us in confidence or to request an information package, please contact:
Mike Kamsteeg,
c/o Christ Community Church,
3897 Holland Ave., Victoria, B.C.,
V8Z 5K2
Phone: 250-479-3297
or e-mail:
ccchurch@islandnet.com

Job Opportunities

Hope House is a safe, Christ centred home where girls aged 13-18 will find nurturing and compassionate care in a long-term residence. We are currently seeking either **a mature Christian woman or a mature Christian couple to fill our permanent live-in position at the home.** This position will be of interest to those who enjoy creating a nurturing environment, and have had experience facilitating the healing and growth of young girls. Leadership and organizational skills are required. Applicants who fulfill the necessary requirements will be contacted by our Board with further details and information. Please forward cover letter and resume to:
Hope House
c/o Chartwell Baptist Church
228 Chartwell Road
Oakville, ON L6J 3Z8
Phone: 905-569-7776 ext. 35
Fax: 905-842-5776

Wanted: Live-in homecare worker to care for elderly woman. Position on beautiful **Vancouver Island.** Several Reformed churches close by. Applicant must have experience dealing with mild dementia/Alzheimers. Must be fluent in Dutch. Committed Christians only, please. Please reply to: **PO Box 800, Duncan, BC V9L 3Y1 or phone 250-743-9309.**

Miscellaneous

The Bible and Islam

by Rev. Bassam Madany

($5.95 Canada/$4.95 U.S.)
How to relate the gospel relevantly to the Muslim heart and mind.
Also available — essays on Understanding the Middle East ($1.50).
Write:
The Back to God Hour
P.O. Box 5070
Burlington, ON
L7R 3Y8

Miscellaneous

"Shout to the Lord" Worship Conference
Saturday, May 5, 2001
Clarkson CRC,
Mississauga, ON

"Where Is God In Our Worship?"

Dr. John Witvliet, from the Institute of Worship at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan heads a terrific cast of speakers, workshop leaders and worshippers at this conference. Please set this day aside to learn more about striving for excellence in worship. Registration forms and brochures outlining the workshops are available from the church office at
905-823-7262
or visit our website at
www.clarksoncrc.on.ca/worship

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www.epilepsy.ca

Classifieds

Teachers

LONDON, ONT.:
Due to a growth in enroiment, expan sion of program, and a leave of absence, **London District Christian Secondary School** is in need of approximately **four (4) teachers** for the 2001-2002 school year. We have openings in a variety of areas (**Math, Science, English, Phys. Ed,** etc.) and need teachers who can teach a combination of courses.
We also have a **possible opening** for a **Visual Arts** position.
Interested applicants are asked to submit a letter of application, statement of faith and resume. If you are a secondary education graduate, we ask that you give our needs prayerful consideration. Allow God to lead you to our London District Christian Secondary School community. Contact:
Henry Kooy, Principal
London District Christian Secondary School
24 Braesyde Ave., London, ON N5W 1V3
e-mail: office@ldcsss.on.ca
Phone: 519-455-4360
Fax: 519-455-4364

WELLANDPORT, ONT.:
Wellandport Christian School invites applications for **definite and possible openings** for the 2001-2002 school year.
Wellandport Christian School is located in the Niagara Peninsula. WCS has a staff of 15 and presently offers Christian education to 229 students in K-8. Interested applicants are to submit their resumes or direct inquiries to:
W. Thies, Principal,
Wellandport Christian School,
844008 Wellandport Road,
Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0
Phone: 905-386-6272;
fax: 905-386-7184;
e-mail: wcs@iaw.on.ca

VERNON, B.C.:
Vernon Christian School is a parent-operated school, serving a diverse Christian community in the sunny Okanagan Valley. Recently we have witnessed a substantial growth in enrollment, directly opposite to the decline that other schools in Vernon are experiencing. We are, God willing, looking to add a **Grade 10 program** in the fall of 2002. To that end we will be hiring a **full time teacher in the fall of 2001**. In addition to a teaching assignment he/she will be asked to give leadership in **developing and growing a Grade 10 program** for 2002.
We are looking for a person who is excited about taking on this challenge. He/she should be a hard-working, self-starter with experience at the **middle and/or secondary school level.** The successful applicant will have strength in the areas of **Math/ Sciences and Computers**. Coaching skills would be an asset as well.
We may also have openings in **Middle School French teacher and a primary teacher.**
Send resumes to:
Mr. Larry Simpson, Principal
Vernon Christian School
6890 Pleasant Valley Rd.,
Vernon, BC V1B 3R5
Phone: 250-545-7345
Fax: 250-545-0254
E-mail: vcs@mindlink.bc.ca

Job Opportunities

Quinte Christian High School

QCHS is growing! We are in a fundraising campaign to build a new school in three years' time. For the new year we are looking at a possible full time position in **Phys. Ed. and Bible for Grades 9-12.** If you are interested in discipling young people and igniting a passion for Jesus, we invite you to submit your resume to the principal in writing: **Quinte Christian High School, 289 Pinnacle St., Belleville, ON K8N 3B3**
Phone: 613-968-7870 Fax: 613-968-7970

CENTENNIAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
TERRACE, B.C.
TEACHING POSITIONS OPEN

Centennial Christian School invites applications for:
- a French teaching position, which involves teaching French at the Grade 7-12 level
- a Band 6-12 position
- a Primary (Grades 1-3) teaching position
- other possible openings in Kindergarten through Grade 12

Centennial Christian School is located in the beautiful Pacific Northwest area of British Columbia. Centennial Christian School is an inter-denominational school with a teaching staff of 17 and a support staff of 13, and presently offers Christian education to 236 students in Kindergarten - Grade 11. Grade 12 is being added in September 2001.
Please contact the principal or vice principal for further details and send letter of application, resume and other information to:
Centennial Christian School
Curtis Tuininga - Principal
Edgar Veldman - Vice Principal
3608 Sparks Street
Terrace, BC V8G 2V6
Phone: 250-635-6173
Fax: 250-635-9385
E-mail: ccs@telus.net

DORDT COLLEGE

Health Care Professional/Instructor

Full Time Staff Position Beginning July 2001

Dordt College has a potential opening for a full-time (12 months) health care professional to provide clinical services to the student body and serve as administrator and instructor for the Health Sciences Program.

Qualifications: M.S.N. with Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP) Certificate and teaching experience. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. To apply, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of inquiry and a curriculum vita/resume:

Dr. Rockne M. McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Avenue NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712 722-4496
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

Send your anniversary, birthday and other important family notices to: *Christian Courier* at fax #: 905-682-8313 or by e-mail to: ccadpromo@aol.com

Teachers

TABER, ALTA.:
Taber Christian School:
Teaching Principal
We are seeking a leader with a commitment to Jesus Christ for an interdenominational K-9 school with an enrolment of 130 students, **beginning September 2001.** Applicants should have a commitment for a reformed world life-view of Christian education and have administrative and team building abilities. If you would like to join our three-campus society in providing high-quality Christian education, please reply to:
Mr. David O'Dell, 4809 60 Ave., Taber, AB T1G 1E9
or e-mail the Principal Search Committee: dodell@ta.monarch.net

TORONTO, ONT.:
Willowdale Christian School.
A school desiring to continue in the Reformed tradition invites applications for definite **Primary and Junior** teaching positions effective September 2001. Candidates with a CSTC will be given preference. **French and Physical Education** expertise will also be appreciated. Please send resumes including a statement of philosophy of education to:
Ms Mary Jansen, Principal
Willowdale Christian School
60 Hilda Ave., North York, ON M2M 1V5
Phone: 416-222-1711
Fax: 416-222-1939

COBOURG, ONT.:
Northumberland Christian School has several **possible openings** for teachers for the 2001/2002 school year. Qualified persons for the **Primary/Junior levels** are invited to apply. Please send package including a cover letter, C.V., references and pastoral letter to:
Northumberland Christian School
8861 Danforth Rd., RR 5
Cobourg, ON K9A 1M6
e-mail: ncss@on.aibn.com
Phone: 905-372-8766
(no faxes please, however, e-mail with attachment is acceptable).

DUNNVILLE, ONT.:
Dunnville Christian School has two possible openings for qualified teachers in the **Junior Division.** Strengths in the teaching of **French, Music and Phys. Ed.** are considered an asset. We have been the best-kept secret in the Niagara area until we posted our Homepage on the Web! You may visit us there at **www.linetap.com/dcs**
Please send your resume to the attention of the principal:
Mr. A.J. Vanderstoel
Dunnville Christian School
37 Robinson Rd., Dunnville, ON N1A 2W1
Phone: 905-774-5142;
Fax: 905-774-5519;
E-mail: dcs@linetap.com

LONDON, ONT.:
Faith Community Christian School is seeking the following for the school year, starting
September 4, 2001:
* **kindergarten teacher** (3 days)
* **junior teacher** (full time)
* **intermediate teacher** (part time)

All candidates must hold a valid Teacher's Certificate, be able to provide an integrated curriculum from the Ontario Ministry of Education combined with the Christian perspective. The following would be an asset:
a Christian education certificate; music/sports training; special education skills.
Applications should include their statement of faith, curriculum vitae, educational philosophy, transcripts and names of three references.
Please submit applications to:
Faith Community Christian School
Attn: Joseph Kadlecik, M. Ed., Principal
7 Howard Ave., London, ON N6P 1B3
Fax: 519-652-1296 or e-mail us at: info@fccs.on.ca
Visit our new website at www.fccs.on.ca

JARVIS, ONT.;
Jarvis District Christian School invites applications for a **definite Grade 8 opening** and **possible teaching positions** at various grade levels for the 2001-2002 school year. Some rotation takes place in Grades 6, 7 and 8.
JDCS is located in a small town, approximately 40 km south of Hamilton. We have a total staff of eleven, (including two part-time), as well as a current enrolment of 191 pupils.
Please send your inquiries, letters of application, resume, a brief statement of philosophy of Christian education ans other related information to:
Garry Glasbergen, Principal
Jarvis District Christian School
PO Box 520, Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0
School phone: 519-587-4444,
school fax: 519-587-2985;
home: 905-765-7919
e-mail: jdcs@kwic.com

REXDALE, ONT.:
Timothy Christian School is a multi cultural, interdenominational school offering quality Christian education to students in the greater Toronto area. Applications for teaching positions are invited for possible openings in:
* **Primary**
* **Junior**
* **Intermediate**

Strengths in Band, Art, P.E. and/or Computer Skills would be an asset.
Please forward applications by March 9 to:
Miss Trudy Jager
Timothy Christian School
28 Elmhurst Dr., Rexdale, ON M9W 2J5
Phone: 416-741-5770;
fax: 416-741-3359

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www.epilepsy.ca

Classifieds

Church Positions

NEEDED: A Senior Pastor due to the pending retirement of Pastor Riemer Praamsma (June 2001).

WHERE: Fellowship C.R.C in Brighton, ON. on the north shore of Lake Ontario (150 km east of Toronto).

PRIORITIES:
1) Equipping the congregation by preaching of the Word and by teaching.
2) To be a Shepherd and to **equip others** to meet the needs of those with spiritual and/or emotional concerns.
3) To lead us in reaching out to the people of Brighton community (pop.8700) in a variety of approaches.

WHEN: When the Holy Spirit is ready to provide us a pastor to lead us forward.

HOW TO REACH US:
Contact the calling committee by:
1) **FAX**: 613-966-1252 (Attn:Stuart Couperus)
2) **E-MAIL**: nancymcgowan@graftonutility.com
3) **WWW**: brightoncrc.org

Faith Community Church is looking for **A PASTOR**
to join us in the rural community of **Milford, Nova Scotia, Canada.** We are prayerfully seeking the pastor God has chosen to work with us in our growing ministry. Our church profile is available through the denominational Pastor-Church Relations office. A full information package is available from the Search Committee.
Please contact:
Mr. Winston Bokma, chairperson; 902-758-2246, RR #1 Shubenacadie, N.S., B0N 2H0
or: Joanne Hankinson, secretary; 902-883-8725, PO Box 64, Lantz, N.S. B0N 1R0 E-mail: dj.hankinson@ns.sympatico.ca

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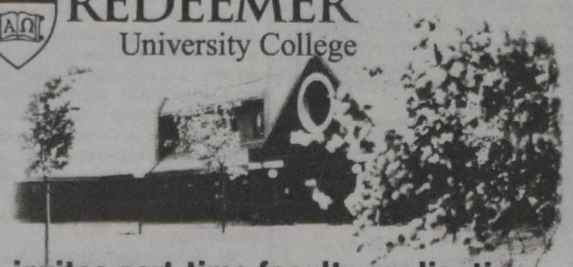
Springdale Christian Reformed Church is seeking a
YOUTH DIRECTOR
to work together with youth leaders in ministering to teenagers and young adults. Our goal is to develop a relational ministry to equip youth to follow Christ. Please forward resume to:
jdepeuter@on.aibn.com
or fax **905-775-3667**

Job Opportunities

REDEEMER
University College



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- **Business**
- **Computer Science** (Computer Programming, Computer Science Issues)
- **History** (Classical History)
- **Physical Education** (Sports Injuries)
- **Psychology** (Research Methods: Experimental design)
- **Social Work** (Social Welfare Policy)

Applicants should possess a Master's degree or Doctorate, and should be in agreement with the Reformed Christian basis of the University.
Deadline: April 15, 2001 or when filled.

Consult the Redeemer website: http://redeemer.on.ca/about/openings.html for a full description.

Direct applications and the names and addresses of three references to:
Dr. Wytse van Dijk
Vice-President (Academic), Redeemer University College
777 Garner Rd. E., Ancaster, Ontario, Canada L9K 1J4
Fax: 905/648-2134, E-mail: vandijk@redeemer.on.ca

Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be considered first for these positions. Redeemer University College is an equal opportunity employer.

OPENINGS AT ABBOTSFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
Abbotsford Christian School, a multi-denominational school system serving over 1000 students at 3 campuses, is inviting applications for a number of definite and possible openings:

- **Elementary classroom teachers** (K -7). Expertise in athletics would be an asset
- **Secondary teachers** in **Humanities, CAPP, Bible, Girls P.E., Math, Art**
- **Special Education** teacher or coordinator

For more information contact one of the principals:

Berta den Haan, Principal	Dave Loewen, Principal	Ed Noot, Principal
Heritage Campus (K-7)	Clayburn Hill Campus (K-7)	Seconday Campus
2884 Mission Hwy.	3939 Old Clayburn Rd.	35011 Old Clayburn Rd.
Abbotsford, BC V2S 3Y2	Abbotsford, BC V3G 1J9	Abbotsford, BC V2S 7L7
Ph: 604-850-5342	Ph: 604-850-2694	Ph: 604-850-5342
Fax: 604-859-9995	Fax: 604-850-7075	Fax: 604-859-2240
bdenhaan@uniserve.com	dloewen@uniserve.com	enoot@uniserve.com

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PACIFIC CHRISTIAN SCHOOL— Victoria, B.C.
Come to the beautiful West Coast and join a dynamic and enthusiastic staff in a thriving, interdenominational Pre-School through Grade 12 school system of 790+ students.
CHRISTIAN TEACHERS REQUIRED FOR 2001/2002
School Year:

* 2 or 3 Full-time Elementary Classroom Teaching Positions,
  - actual assignment flexible within Grades 1-7
  - strength in computers or French an asset
* 1 Half-time Elementary classroom teacher
* Special Education (K-12) and Learning Assistance (Gr. 5-7)
* Secondary French
* Secondary Drama
* Secondary Teacher Librarian

Teachers must be committed Christians and certifiable by the B.C. College of Teachers. Send letter of application and resume, including a Pastor's reference and statement of faith to:

Bill Helmus, Elementary Principal
Pacific Christian School
671 Agnes Street,
Victoria, B.C. V8Z 2E7
Phone: 250-479-9365
Fax: 250-479-3685
E-Mail: pcs01@islandnet.com

John Messelink, Secondary Principal
Pacific Christian School
654 Agnes Street,
Victoria, B.C. V8Z 2E6
Phone: 250-479-4532
Fax: 250-479-3511
E-Mail: pcshs@islandnet.com

***Timothy Christian School** (Rexdale) has a definite opening for*

PRINCIPAL

beginning the 2001-2002 school year.

Our school of 200 students and thirteen staff was established in 1958 and is situated in a northwest suburb of Toronto, known as Rexdale. If you are interested in leading a dedicated staff and being supported by a committed Christian school community, we invite you to apply for this position. We look forward to assisting you use your talents and gifts in our school to help prepare God's children for service in His kingdom. Please send resumes (include references), a statement of faith and a brief philosophy of education to:

Principal Search Committee
Att.: Timothy Christian School,
28 Elmhurst Drive, Rexdale, ON M9W 2J5
If you wish to know more about the position please feel free to direct enquiries to:
Mr. William Groot 416-743-2554

A Caring Community — Rooted in God's Word

Hamilton District Christian High School
would be happy to receive letters of application and resumes for possible openings in:

English
Social Sciences
and Music

We are looking for qualified teachers who love the Lord, enjoy being with energetic students, and can clearly communicate their subject expertise. If you wish to join our dynamic Christian learning community, respond in writing to:

Hamilton District Christian High School
George Van Kampen, Principal
92 Glancaster Road
Ancaster, ON L9G 3K9
or e-mail gvankampen@hdch.org

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Miscellaneous

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Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

April 7	40th Anniversary Spring Concert, Ont. Music Assembly, Leendert Kooij directing, **St.Catharines**, 7:30 p.m. St. Thomas Anglican Church. Call 905-934-7712.
April 7	Liberation Choir, Ebenezer CRC, **Trenton,** Ont. Tickets $10. For info. Call Grace Kalverda 905-457-2348.
April 8	Dutch Service, Ancaster CRC, 70 Garner Rd. E, **Ancaster,** Ont. 3 p.m. , Rev. John Groen preaching.
April 21	40th Anniversary Spring Concert Ont. Music Assembly, Leendert Kooij, Springdale CRC, **Bradford,** Ont. 7:30 p.m. Call 905-775-2230.
April 21	Festival of Praise Concert, 8 Christian Men's Choirs, 330 voices, Living Arts Centre, **Mississauga,** Ont. at 7:30 p.m., presented by the Choraliers Chr. Male Chorus of Brampton. See ad in this issue.
April 21	"Go Dutch", Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group "De doffer op de dakgoot" 8 p.m, **Jordan,** Ont. in the Christian Heritage School. See ad in Feb.19 issue.
April 21	Spring Concert "O, Sing Unto The Lord", Pro Musica Choir of Burlington, directed by renowned conductor Ian Sadler, featuring Handel's Dettingen Te Deum, guest artist, organist, Elizabeth Harwood; 8 p.m. at Port Nelson United Church, 3132 South Dr., **Burlington,** Ont. Advance tickets: Adults $10; Seniors/Students $8; Family rate (16/under) $30. $2 more at the door. Phone Marj: 905-632-1347.
April 21	Institute for Chr. Studies presents The Evan Runner Chair in the History of Philosophy, Dr. R Sweetman will give an address; 3 p.m. Calvin College Chapel, **Grand Rapids**, Mich. Reception following. See ad.
May 5	"Shout to the Lord", Worship Conference, Clarkson CRC, **Mississauga,** Ont. Call 905-823-7262. See ad.
May 19-20	50th Anniversary Taber CRC, **Taber,** Alta. See ad in this issue. Call 403-223-8402; e-mail: dvisser@telusplanet.net
May 20	Dutch Service Ancaster CRC, 70 Garner Rd. E, **Ancaster**, Ont. 3 p.m. Rev. John Hellinga preaching.
June 2	Liberation Choir, Grace Anglican Church, 15 Albion Rd., **Brantford**, Ont. For info call 905-457-2348.
June 7-9	Bible and Ministry Conference, **Calvin Theological Seminary.** For info. pverho72@calvin.edu. See ad.

Climate Change Fast Fact

(NC)—The energy used in the average Canadian home produces 6.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide – one of the greenhouse gases that is causing climate change – each year. By sealing air leaks, upgrading attic insulation and installing energy-efficient windows and appliances in your home, you can dramatically reduce your energy use. You will emit less carbon dioxide, and have a more comfortable house and smaller energy bills. For more tips on what you can do to cut greenhouse gas emissions, visit www.climatechange.gc.ca or call 1-800-OCANADA and ask for a brochure called Taking Action on Climate Change.

- News Canada

If there were a righteousness which a man could have of his own, then we should have to concern ourselves with the question of how it can be imparted to him.

But there is not. The idea of a righteousness of one's own is the quintessence of sin.

... Lesslie Newbigin

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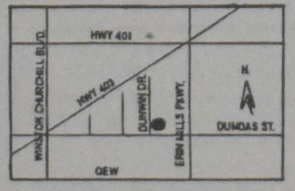

Mississauga, Dundas St. — 2 Blocks W. of Erin Mills Parkway (905) 828-9511

Festival Of Praise Concert

8 Christian Men's Choirs from Ontario

Saturday, April 21 - 7:30 p.m

Living Arts Centre - Mississauga

4141 Living Arts Drive at Square One

Featuring 8 Choirs - 330 voices

With special guest organist Christopher Dawes and **The Trillium Brass**

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From the Living Arts Centre Box Office, 905-306-6000 or toll free 1-888-805-8888

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News

Reformed Christian school planned for Japan

Alan Doerksen

TOKYO, Japan — Japan is a country where there are many obstacles to setting up Christian schools. But Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) and the Society for the Promotion of Christian Schooling in Japan are determined to set up a model Christian school in the Tokyo area within the next two years.

"The Society is moving forward, planning to start at least one school as soon as possible," explains Jeong Gho, a CRWM missionary working in Japan. "Until last year, the works of the Society were mainly to promote the necessity of the Christian school movement to the Reformed Church in Japan. However, from last year, the major focus has been shifting from promoting the necessity of Christian school movement to starting at least one model school.... The Society is planning to start one in Hikarigaoka, Nerimaku [in the Tokyo area]."

The Society was started in 1995 by CRWM missionaries and leaders of the Reformed Church in Japan (RCJ). In December 1995, *Christian Courier* reported that the Society had plans to eventually start Christian schools and provide Christian curriculum materials.

Part of long-term strategy

The promotion of Christian schooling has also been written into the long-term strategy of CRWM in Japan, according to Larry Spalink, field director for CRWM in Japan. Back in the 1950s, CRWM helped to start the Christian Academy in Japan, which continues to provide Christian schooling for missionary children in the Tokyo area.

According to Spalink, "The focus of our work in Japan is twofold: the church planting ministry in co-operation with the Reformed Church of Japan (which is primary) and the operation of Christian Academy in Japan (CAJ), a school of 430 students, 65 per cent of whom are children of evangelical missionaries (the CRC is one sixth owner of CAJ). The founding of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Schools, of which CRWM was a part, is a small effort to give a fuller impact to the RCJ, especially in the training of its youth. It is truly a small beginning and a minor part of our work at this point, but we are hoping and praying that the members of the RCJ will catch the vision of Christian schools, and we will facilitate that by participating in the formative discussions."

COURTESY LARRY SPALINK

Larry Spalink (second from left), field director for CRWM in Japan, with his family.

Many challenges ahead

There are several major challenges facing the Society, Spalink explained in an e-mail interview.

"One of the biggest challenges is the smallness of the Christian population. Another is the enormous cost of doing anything in Japan, especially in the matter of securing facilities. Still another is the educational system in Japan with its rigidness and the paranoia about getting in the right track, already at the preschool level, to then get into the right one at each subsequent level up to university, in order to get a decent job and station in society. The 'exam hell' phenomenon is a product of this system which all acknowledge to be a horror yet no one seems prepared to change."

"Finally I would also list as an obstacle the Education Ministry bureaucracy which regulates to the 'nth' degree all the programs of the schools in the country."

Help from VIPs

Gho agrees that to start Christian schools, "of course, there will be many challenges. Though the Society has a high vision, RCJ alone is too weak to start a Christian school. Support given from the VIP members will help start this school." Gho reports that he, as supervising missionary and adviser of the Society, has met with several members of a group called VIP Japan "to pool necessary resources together to start one model school.... Several members of VIP Japan have shown an interest, and have offered support. Furthermore, several members of the Society are working hard to raise funds."

"'VIP Japan' is an organization of Christian business people who are determined to use the power and resources God has entrusted to them for the advancement of Kingdom causes," explains Spalink. "They are not a 'Reformed' group by any means, but they have indicated to [Gho] some willingness to help finance the beginning of a day school. The RCJ people are a little stand-offish about working with this group. I have no idea how things may proceed, but it sure is presenting some interesting possibilities. Keep praying with us!"

Although there were Christian schools in Japan from the early days of mission work in the late 1800s, they have declined in recent years, Spalink explains. "Many of these schools were self-consciously Reformed in their orientation, though over the years, most of these have had that focus rather thoroughly watered down."

Many former mission schools now follow strict government demands, although many still offer chapel services and Bible instruction.

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News Digest

Patron saint for guns?

VATICAN CITY (CNN.com) — Admirers of a gun-toting saint are campaigning for him to be made the patron saint of handgun owners. St. Gabriel Possenti was known as a skilled gunman and is said to have once used his skills to prevent a woman from being attacked.

John Snyder, a former worker for the U.S. National Rifle Association, is leading the campaign to give the saint the new title. He said making Possenti the patron of handgun owners would demonstrate that the Vatican was "courageous enough to stick its neck out for the right of individuals to defend themselves against evil and tyranny."

Although the Vatican has approved many saints as patrons of various occupations or groups, its press office said naming a patron for gun lobbyists was not opportune. Snyder said the Vatican told him he needed to enlist bishops from around the world for his cause.

'Raging Granny' freed

VANCOUVER — Betty Krawczyk, a 72-year-old great-grandmother and environmental activist, is free after serving four months in prison. She is a member of the Raging Grannies, a group of elderly women who wear gaudy dresses and hats and sing satirical songs. Last year, Krawczyk defied a court injunction barring protests against the cutting of ancient Douglas fir trees in B.C.'s Elaho Valley, and received a one-year sentence — one of the harshest ever imposed in such a case, reports the *Globe and Mail*.

But recently, B.C.'s Court of Appeal reduced her sentence to time already served, and she was freed. "It's really good to be out," she said. "I am happy people are beginning to recognize through me that the public owns these public forests."

Letters to God

WINSLOW, Maine — Here are some examples of letters to God written by children:

- I bet it is very hard for you to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only four people in our family and I can never do it.
- Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they had their own rooms. It works with my brother.
- We read Thomas Edison made light. But in Sunday school they said you did it. So, I bet he stole your idea.